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PROSPECTUS

OF A

NEW TRANSLATION

OF THE

HOLY BIBLE

FROM CORRECTED TEXTS OF THE ORIGINALS, COMPARED WITH THE ANCIENT VERSIONS.

WITH

VARIOUS READINGS, EXPLANATORY NOTES, AND CRITICAL OBSERVATIONS.

BY

The Rev. ALEXANDER GEDDES, L.L.D.

GLASGOW:

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD PETRE.

BS
445

PERMIT me, My Lord, to preſent you with the firſt fruits of many years painful labour; in the pleaſing hope of being, one day, able to lay before you the whole harveſt. That *theſe* or *that* will be worthy of your Lordship's and the Public's acceptance, it would be preſumptuous in me to ſay, but is extremely natural for me to wiſh. Meanwhile, I have the honour to be, with very great reſpect,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

Ever grateful and

Moſt obedient humble ſervant,

A. G.

HISTORY
JUL 18 1940
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TO THE READER.

THE following Proſpectus was fairly written out for the preſs nearly two years ago. This, it is hoped, will account for ſome things being added in the notes, which, perhaps, might have been more properly incorporated in the text. In reading over the printed ſheets, I have obſerved ſome typographical errors, the principal of which are corrected on the reverſe of this leaf: but there is a miſtake page 100 line 15, that needs to be apologized for. An edition of the New Teſtament is there ſaid to have been mentioned before, although it is not mentioned till afterwards, in the note, p. 131, which the reader is requeſted to attend to.

TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS.

Page 32. in the note read—*Septuaginta*.
36. in the note read—counſils.
38. l. 10. read—a more correct.
63. l. 11. read—perſuade.
110. l. 5. read—tranſlators.
116. l. 9. read—Oecumenius.
121. l. 5. read—*memoires*.
137. l. 19. read—exclude.

8. 9. pertinacity

PROSPECTUS

OF A

NEW TRANSLATION

OF THE

HOLY BIBLE.

HAVING long made the HOLY SCRIPTURES and the languages in which they were originally written, my particular ſtudy, I ventured, ſome years ago, to give an *Idea* of a new Tranſlation of the whole BIBLE; at the requeſt of a perſon of diſtinction, who wiſhed I would undertake ſuch a work. That ſketch, imperfect as it was, meeting with the approbation of ſome of the moſt learned and reſpectable characters in the kingdom, I have been ſince adviſed by my friends to publiſh a more ample *Proſpectus;* and, for many reaſons, I find myſelf ſtrongly diſpoſed to follow their advice.

For although it muſt be yet ſome conſiderable time, before the Tranſlation itſelf will be ready for the preſs, there can be no impropriety in letting the learned public know, that it is preparing; and putting it in the power of thoſe who chooſe it, to help me with their

counſel and aſſiſtance, in the proſecution of ſo laborious and arduous an undertaking.

That a new Tranſlation of the Bible, particularly of the Old Teſtament, is ſtill wanted, I ſhall aſſume as a poſition generally agreed upon. To explore the cauſes that have concurred to render former Tranſlations defective, and to point out the means and method by which a part of their defects may be removed, is the intention of this PROSPECTUS; which I now deliver to the public, with all that anxious diffidence, which the great importance of the ſubject and the mediocrity of my abilities demand.

The firſt and principal cauſe of the imperfection of almoſt all modern Tranſlations of the Bible is to be ſought for in the imperfection and incorrectneſs of the originals, from which they were made; for, when the text to be tranſlated is itſelf corrupted, the tranſlation muſt neceſſarily participate of its corruption: but modern tranſlations of the Bible have, almoſt all, been made from a text in many places corrupted: How then could they fail to be, at leaſt, equally faulty?

It is an aſſertion no leſs ſtrange than true, that the text of ſcarcely any profane author of note has been ſo incorrectly publiſhed as that of the Hebrew Scriptures. To reſtore Demoſthenes, Tully, Virgil, Horace, as nearly as poſſible, to their firſt integrity, no human pains have been ſpared: libraries have been ranſacked, manuſcripts collated, parallel places compared, hiſtory, geography,

criticiſm alternately called in to aſſiſtance: and happy was the man who, after a length of time, and with immenſe labour, could fill up the ſmalleſt chaſm; detect the moſt inſignificant interpolation; rectify a ſingle tranſpoſition; alter a ſingle ſentence, or change a ſingle letter to the improvement of his favourite author. This ſort of labour gave celebrity, during the two laſt centuries, to many perſons of real genius and learning; and although, in theſe days of pretended refinement and philoſophy, we are too apt to call them pedants, and to depretiate their ſtudies; yet to them we certainly owe a great part of the pleaſure which we find in peruſing the works of antiquity.

But why were not the ſame pains taken, and the ſame means employed, to give a correct edition of the Bible? and how is it, that, of all edited books, it ſtill remains the moſt incorrect that ever came from the preſs? Was it accounted of leſs importance than the reſt? Not ſo: both Jews and Chriſtians, the orthodox and the ſeparatiſt, equally conſidered it as the richeſt treaſure they could poſſeſs; as a code of laws and a ſyſtem of morality delivered to them from Heaven; the object of their belief and the rule of their conduct; in ſhort, the Book of books; compared with which, all other compoſitions are trifling and vain.

Were the editors, then, ignorant or careleſs? Quite the contrary: many of them were men of uncommon erudition; and all of them boaſted of the incredible pains they had been at, to give to their

ſeveral editions, as great a degree of perfection, as can be attained by human induſtry. This was their uniform language, from Bomberg to Vanderhoogh t; and it muſt be allowed that, in ſome reſpects, their diligence was, at leaſt, equal to their learning.

Had they exerted the ſame talents, and taken the ſame pains to correct the text, by ſuch helps as yet remained; as they employed to preſerve and embelliſh it, in its ſtate of depravation; we might have, long ſince, been in the poſſeſſion of a copy of the Hebrew Scriptures, as nearly perfect as, at this diſtance of time, we can reaſonably look for; and freed, at leaſt, from innumerable imperfections that ſtill diſgrace it: but the more thoſe men laboured, the leſs they may be ſaid to have advanced; and we ſcruple not to affirm that the celebrated edition of Amſterdam in 1705, is a leſs valuable copy of the primitive Hebrew text, than that which was printed at Soncino, nearly 300 years ago *.

It could not, indeed, well be otherwiſe. The editors, or at leaſt the correctors of the preſs, were generally Jews; entirely devoted to their rabbinical prejudices. By theſe they appretiated the manuſcript that was to ſerve as an archetype for the impreſſion. The Maſora was to thoſe text-torturers the bed of Procruſtes, to the exact length and breadth of which every word was to be fitted with the greateſt preciſion; and, this pretended ſtandard being once eſtabliſhed as infallible, all poſterior editions were judged to be accurate

* In 1488. See Fabricy *Titres Primitifs*.

or erroneous, only as far as they agreed or diſagreed with it.

To ſome it may ſeem hard to conceive, how the learned of the Chriſtian perſuaſion ſhould have adopted the ſame ideas; and, in this point, given implicit credit to a ſet of men, whom, in almoſt every other reſpect, they believed to be the vileſt impoſtors. Several cauſes, however, concurred to beget and propagate this groſs deluſion.

The ſtudy of Hebrew, which had been but little cultivated among Chriſtians, even in the brighteſt periods of Chriſtianity, had now for many ages been almoſt totally neglected. The firſt teachers of it, on the revival of letters, were Jews, or converts from Judaiſm. Theſe failed not to impreſs upon the minds of their too credulous diſciples the higheſt ideas of the learning of the Maſoretes, and of their ſcrupulous attention to preſerve the ſacred records from every ſhadow of error, by means of a certain canon of divine origin, traditionally handed down to them from their great law-giver Moſes; or, at leaſt, from the prophet Ezra. Independent of this canon the ſcriptures were, they affirmed, a locked-up treaſure. The Maſora was both a key to open, and a hedge to guard them: the very grammar of the language in which they were written could not be learned without it.

The ſcholars of thoſe pedagogues became pedagogues in their turn; and as we are ever apt to think that method of attaining ſcience the beſt, which we have followed, eſpecially if it has been a painful one, they inculcated to their pupils the abſolute neceſſity

of purſuing the ſame rugged and thorny path, which they had themſelves purſued before, as the only one that could lead, directly and infallibly, to the ſanctuary of holy writ. Thus, with the firſt elements of Hebrew learning, were propagated in the Chriſtian ſchools the moſt ridiculous notions of the Rabbins; and no one called in queſtion their bold aſſertions, becauſe no one ſuppoſed he could know any thing of the matter, but through them *.

Beſides, it was a flattering conſideration to thoſe who believed the Bible to be from God, to think that God had provided for it a perpetual ſafeguard, which ſhould ſecure every word, ſyllable, letter, and apex from all ſorts of corruption or alteration, to the end of time. They did not think of enquiring how this ſame ſecurity had, for ſo many ages, been itſelf ſecured; nor did they reflect, that, if it had ever been the intention of the Deity to preſerve, in a miraculous manner, the primitive text of ſcripture from ſuch accidental errors, as all other writings are liable to, it would have been more agreeable to what we know of his wiſdom, to have made the miracle accompany the text itſelf, than, leaving the text to common riſks, have provided a ſeparate oral canon, by which it

* Hence it ſoon became a ſort of axiom among theologians, that a thorough knowledge of the Hebrew could not be acquired without the aid of the Maſora; and that none but a ſkilful Maſorete could give a good edition of the Bible. Theſe prepoſſeſſions were ſo deeply rooted, that they kept their ground for almoſt three centuries, and are not yet quite eradicated. They were adopted, in part, even by F. Simon; in other reſpects, a critic of great acumen, and no way a ſlave to inveterate opinions.

might, from time to time, be rectified, and which ſhould have the wonderful privilege of being liable to no corruption; a canon, too, ſo prolix, ſo intricate, and ſo confuſed as the Maſora *.

Nor did they call to mind, that thoſe of the firſt Chriſtians who had ſtudied the Hebrew, while it was yet, in ſome meaſure, a living tongue, were totally ignorant of ſuch a canon; and knew of no other rules for correcting the ſcriptures, but a careful collation of the beſt manuſcripts, and the uſe of a ſober criticiſm. They overlooked even the obvious argument which they might have drawn from a compariſon of the New Teſtament, their own peculiar code, with the Old, which more particularly appertained to the Jews. For the former, they could not be ignorant, God had provided no ſuch ſecurity; why ſhould he have done it for the latter? giving more to the figure than to the reality, and preferring the ſon of the bond woman to that of the free? To theſe, and other abſurdities, connected with this opinion, they did not attend: it was enough for them that it flattered their prejudices and favoured their belief: that alone was ſufficient to give it a general currency.

It is not, however, probable that ſo baſe a metal could have long continued to circulate, if it had not received a new degree of

* The Engliſh reader, who wiſhes to have ſome idea of the Maſora, may conſult *Simon's critical hiſtory of the Old Teſtament*, *Prideaux's connections*, or *Kennicott's ſecond diſſertation on the ſtate of the Hebrew text*.

credit from the revolution in religion that happened ſoon after. The Proteſtants, on ſeparating from the communion of Rome, ſeem to have thought they could not get at too great a diſtance*. Finding it convenient to appeal from the deciſions of a living aſſembly to the dead letter of ſcripture, they conſidered themſelves as under a neceſſity of maintaining, that the ſcripture-text was not only incorrupted, but even incorruptible; and as the Maſoretic ſyſtem favoured this hypotheſis, they adopted it without heſitation, and defended it with more pertinacy than even the Jews themſelves. To recede from it in the ſmalleſt degree, was, they imagined, to open a door for Popery, by overturning this fundamental article of Proteſtantiſm, "That the ſcripture alone is a ſufficient and infal-" lible rule of faith."

So generally diffuſed, and ſo ſtrongly rivetted was this prejudice, that when Capellus firſt ventured to unclinch it, in his *Critica Sacra*, he was accounted a ſort of apoſtate from the ſound doctrine of the reformed churches, and could not find a Proteſtant book-ſeller to print his work. And, what is ſtill more ſtrange, when

* Many other inſtances could be given of this diſpoſition to run into extremes. "Some of " our reformed brethren" (ſays Biſhop Berkley in the character of Crito) "becauſe the Ro-" maniſts attributed too much to the fathers, ſeem to have attributed too little to them, from " a very uſual, though no very judicious oppoſition." Min. Phil. Dial. vi. Sect. 27.—Reynolds thought it a ſufficient reaſon to reject altogether the uſe of the croſs, becauſe the Papiſts had *abuſed* it; and ſome of the Scotch Calviniſts had ſuch averſion to liturgies and ſet forms of prayer, that they would not uſe even that of our Lord.

Dr. Kennicott, not many years ago, publiſhed his excellent *Diſſertations* on the ſtate of the Hebrew text, thoſe were not wanting, even in this country, who brought the ſame charges againſt him as had been formerly brought againſt Capellus; nor did it depend on them, that the greateſt literary undertaking of this, or indeed of any other age, was not quaſhed in its very beginning, as hurtful to Chriſtianity.

It cannot be denied, that the Catholic divines in general formed a ſounder judgment of the ſtate of the Hebrew text than the generality of Proteſtants. Whether it was always a ſincere love for the truth, or ſometimes an exceſſive partiality for the Vulgate verſion, that made them ſo keen and clear-ſighted in diſcovering the faults of the original, I will not take upon me to determine: but the fact is certain, they generally judged rightly of the then ſtate of the original; and there are few paſſages of it impugned as erroneous by Bellarmine, Gordon *, Morinus, &c. which are not now acknowledged to be ſo by the moſt learned Proteſtants.

From this, however, it is true ſome Catholic writers drew concluſions, that were by no means fairly deducible. They argued,

* James Gordon (commonly called *Huntlaeus*, becauſe of the Huntly family, to diſtinguiſh him from another Jeſuit of the ſame name of the family of Leſmore) was one of the moſt acute and artful adverſaries of the preſent Hebrew text. It was to oppoſe his little tract *De Verbo Dei*, that Glaſſius wrote his *Philologia Sacra*. Gordon's ſtile is clear and conciſe; and his arguments generally concluſive. It muſt be confeſſed, however, that he extols the Vulgate above meaſure, and advances ſome unſupportable propoſitions.

that, becauſe the Hebrew text was in many places corrupted, where the Vulgate was not; therefore the Vulgate was, every where, preferable to the Hebrew text. The ſtrange miſconception of a decree of the Council of Trent gave riſe, or at leaſt new ſtrength to this abſurd opinion. That Synod had declared the Vulgate to be an authentic verſion of the Scripture, in the plain and obvious ſenſe we ſhall ſee in the ſequel; yet the word *authentic* became a ſubject of eager controverſy in the Catholic univerſities: ſome affirming it only meant, that the Vulgate was in general a faithful verſion, containing nothing contrary to faith or morality, and having every thing neceſſary to conſtitute an authentic document; while others contended, with more zeal than prudence, that it implied an abſolute and excluſive authenticity in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the word; which gave it a preference and ſuperiority not only over all other tranſlations, but alſo over the originals themſelves. It is to be remarked that this laſt opinion was that of the moſt ignorant, the former that of the moſt learned of the Catholic theologians; and that they, who were the foremoſt in depreſſing the Hebrew text to enhance the value of the Vulgate, were the leaſt of all qualified to appretiate the merits of either. At preſent there ſeems to be but one opinion on this ſubject; and that is, luckily, the right one.

With regard to the ſtate of the Hebrew text, there has of late been a wonderful revolution in the minds of men. Proteſtants and

Catholics ſeem to have changed ſides; and while many of the former, in every country, find *errata* in it by thouſands, there are ſome of the latter, who can hardly diſcern in it any error at all. Thus it is, and thus it always will be, where parties are concerned. What is particularly reliſhed by one, will, for that very reaſon, be diſliked by another; and few, very few indeed, will be found, on either ſide, to hold that golden medium, beyond which the truth is vainly ſought for. Here the truth is, at leaſt ſo to me it appears, that the original Hebrew text is neither ſo very much corrupted as ſome Catholics of former, and many Proteſtants of latter days affirm, nor yet ſo void of errors as ſome Catholics of this, and almoſt all the Proteſtants of the laſt age maintained it to be. Still, however, its moſt ſtrenuous advocates, whether Catholic or Proteſtant, will now, we preſume, be obliged to confeſs, that it is evidently more or leſs erroneous*; and, conſequently, that it is the

* The ſticklers for the abſolute integrity of the Hebrew text have ſo often changed their ground, and aſſumed ſo many different poſitions, that it requires, if not great ſkill, at leaſt much patience to continue the conteſt with them. Their firſt grand palladium was the Maſora, under the protection of which they deemed their fortreſs impregnable. Capellus did not, like Ulyſſes, rob them of their ſacred guardian; he ſtormed their citadel in deſpite of her, and revealed to the wondering world her impotency to defend them.—Forced from this hold, they took poſſeſſion of another. "Let it be granted," ſaid they, "that the Maſora is of rab-"binical, not divine authority; yet the wonderful uniformity of all the Hebrew manu-"ſcripts, and their perfect agreement with the printed copy is the ſtrongeſt evidence of the "integrity of the latter; and implies, if not a miraculous preſervation of the text, an atten-"tion in the copyiſts that borders on a miracle." This was long a capital and a favourite argument. It was an argument founded on a matter of fact, which even Capellus did not

firſt duty of a tranſlator to examine into, and aſcertain its errors; to trace them up, if poſſible, to their ſource; and endeavour to remove them by every mean in his power.

chuſe to deny; becauſe it was aſſerted with ſuch confidence, and becauſe he had no direct proofs of the contrary. In vain he attacked them with other weapons; in vain he proved that the ancients had frequently read otherwiſe than we do; in vain he ſhewed that the preſent reading is often improbable, ſometimes ſeemingly abſurd: ſtill the pretended uniformity of all the copies was conſidered as an unſurmountable obſtacle, even by many of thoſe who, in other reſpects, acknowledged the full force of Capellus's reaſoning; and, thus, his opponents inſultingly triumphed, under the ſecurity of a mere preſumption. When, by an actual examination and collation of manuſcripts, they were at length driven out of this poſt alſo, they ſought ſecurity for themſelves, by trying to make their adverſaries invidious; and held forth to the public the dreadful conſequences to religion, if it ſhould be once allowed that the Scriptures had not come down to us in their full original purity. In this new mode of warfare, they employed ſtratagems not much to their honour. They imputed to the defenders of the oppoſite ſyſtem, views which they never dreamed of, and ſentiments which they openly diſavowed. The advantage that aroſe from ſuch diſingenuous artifices, could not be of long duration. The diſcerning public ſoon perceived the weakneſs of an argument merely negative, oppoſed to facts and demonſtrations; and the popular odium, which its abettors had endeavoured to throw on others, was turned into a ſtream of ridicule againſt themſelves. They now ſeem diſpoſed to give up the divine authority of the Maſora, the miraculous preſervation of the text, and even its abſolute integrity through any means whatever: but ſtill they ſtrenuouſly defend the abſolute ſuperiority of the preſent printed copy, to all other copies or verſions; and maintain, that we have no right to alter or correct it, even on the authority of manuſcripts. Hear their reaſon. "The firſt editors of the Hebrew Bible had manu-"ſcripts as well as we, and probably more ancient and correct manuſcripts than now exiſt: the "new critic-collators have not yet found one ſo correct, in the whole, as the printed copy; "therefore, the printed copy is not to be corrected by manuſcripts confeſſedly more errone-"ous than itſelf." Never was the abuſe of logic carried to a greater exceſs. We will grant, what perhaps we ſhould not grant, that the preſent printed text is, in the whole, more correct than any ſingle manuſcript: does it hence follow, that, in every particular part, it is more correct than all the manuſcripts together; or even than ſome one individual manuſcript, ſingly conſidered? Had the firſt editors accurately deſcribed the manuſcripts they uſed, and

All the corruptions, that get into the text of any writing, are owing either to deſign or overſight. Whether or not any parts of the Hebrew ſcriptures have been deſignedly corrupted, is a queſtion, that was early agitated in the Chriſtian church; and, for the firſt four centuries, the affirmative ſeems to have been the prevailing opinion, among both the Greek and Latin fathers. That opinion, which the authority of Saint Jerom * and Saint Auguſtine had, in a great meaſure, rendered obſolete for many ages, has, in modern times, been revived and warmly defended by critics of the firſt abilities, and as warmly oppoſed by others of equal celebrity.

indicated the repoſitories they were to be found in; we ſhould have it in our power to compare them with the printed text, and with one another, and be able to form a better judgment, both of the fidelity of the editors, and of the reſpective merit of their manuſcripts; or, if theſe no more exiſted, we ſhould know, at leaſt, that they are loſt. As things are, the faireſt inference we can draw, and the moſt favourable judgment we can form is this, that the editors followed the beſt manuſcripts they could find. But ſo did all other firſt editors, if they were not fools: yet it has never, I think, been affirmed that poſterior editions, of any other book but the Bible, might not, and may not ſtill, be improved by a collation of more manuſcripts; ſhould theſe even, taken ſeparately, be leſs correct and valuable than the firſt that were uſed. But what if I ſhould aſſert that there are ſeveral ſingle manuſcripts of the Hebrew ſcriptures; any one of which is a more correct copy of the original, than the printed one? what method would they take to redargue my aſſertion; and by what criterion could the queſtion between us be rationally decided? By none other, I preſume, than analogy and circumſtantial evidence, examined at the bar of ſound and ſober criticiſm.

* This father is not always conſiſtent with himſelf. Sometimes he poſitively charges the Jews with having wilfully corrupted the text; at other times, he ſeems to exculpate them of this grievous accuſation. We will not ſay, with Simon, that when he accuſes them he ſpeaks againſt his own ſentiments; but rather ſuppoſe, that he afterwards changed them, as many other honeſt men have done.

There is this obſervable difference, however, in their reſpective modes of reaſoning. The former ſupport their ſentiment by poſitive arguments and indiſputable facts; whereas the latter ground theirs, chiefly, on negative improbabilities, and the dangerous conſequences which flow, they pretend, from the oppoſite hypotheſis. I ſhall have occaſion, elſewhere, to treat largely on this ſubject: at preſent I ſhall only ſay that the truth ſtill appears to be in the middle. For although we ſhould not, perhaps, eaſily admit that ſo many paſſages have been deſignedly corrupted, as a certain claſs of writers would have us believe; yet it cannot, I think, be well denied, that there are, in ſome inſtances, ſuch ſtrong marks of wilful contamination, as to leave little room for doubt.

But by far the greater part of Biblical corruptions, are to be aſcribed to the ſame ordinary cauſes, that produce them in all other writings; the ignorance, the careleſſneſs, the inaccuracy of copyiſts; and as the number of ſuch corruptions, in any writing, is generally in proportion to the number of years it has exiſted, and the number of times it has been copied; is it to be wondered that the Hebrew text of the Bible ſhould, at this day, contain a very great number of ſuch corruptions? It would be a wonder indeed, if it did not: for how could it be, with any ſhew of reaſon, imagined, that a book ſo old as the Bible; written in a language, that has long ſince ceaſed to be vernacular; tranſcribed by ſo many different perſons, in ſo many different places; and under ſo many

different circumſtances and ſituations; through all that viciſſitude of fortune, that has attended the Jewiſh people; ſhould have contracted no ſpot nor blemiſh, in the courſe of two thouſand years? That waters, which have rolled for ages through a thouſand different ſoils and channels, ſhould be ſtill as pure and untainted as when they iſſued from their primitive ſource, would be far leſs wonderful, than that the Hebrew ſcriptures ſhould have remained in their firſt integrity.

Beſide theſe circumſtantial and extraneous cauſes of miſtake, that are more or leſs common to them with all old writings, there are others which make the Hebrew ſcriptures particularly liable to chirographical errors; and which may be called intrinſic ſources of corruption. At one period, the whole text was changed from the Hebrew to the Chaldee characters *. Many of the letters in both alphabets have a ſtrong reſemblance to one another; and, in, ſome of them, the diacritic marks are hardly diſtinguiſhable. The invention of vowel-points, by rendering the genuine vocal elements quieſcent, gave frequently occaſion to throw them out as uſeleſs; and that very thing, which was abſurdly looked upon as the chief preſervative of the ſacred text from future errors, largely contributed to make it ſtill more erroneous.

If, with all this, we take into conſideration the colloquial tauto-

* This at leaſt is the common belief; and the arguments that have been urged againſt it, appear not ſufficient to overturn it.

logy of the Scripture ſtile, the frequent occurrence of the ſame words and phraſes, the repetition of the ſame or nearly the ſame ſentences, the proximity and contiguity of the ſame terminations, the conſtant return of the ſame particles, pronouns and proper names, and the deceptions continually ariſing from the aſſociation of ideas, ſimilarity of ſounds and equivalence of meaning, we ſhall be obliged to confeſs that it was ſcarcely poſſible for the moſt diligent and attentive tranſcriber to avoid committing many overſights.

That many ſuch overſights have been actually committed, and that a great number of corruptions have, by that means, gradually crept into the text, are poſitions which have, of late, been ſo invincibly eſtabliſhed, that no one, we truſt, will in future preſume to call them in queſtion. But let not this alarm the pious reader, as if the authenticity of the Scriptures were thereby weakened, or their authority rendered precarious. Were it neceſſary, to conſtitute an authentic deed, that the moſt recent and remote copies of it ſhould be exactly the ſame with the firſt autograph, there would be no ſuch thing in the world as any ancient authentic deed, of which the autograph had been loſt: there could be no ſuch thing, without a continual miracle. It is enough, that there is ſufficient evidence of its being eſſentially the ſame with the original; and that the changes it has undergone, whether from deſign or accident, are not ſuch as can affect its authority, as a genuine record.

Such, preciſely, is the caſe of the Hebrew ſcriptures. Notwith-

ſtanding all the various corruptions of whatſoever ſort, that now diſfigure them; it is as certain, as any poſition of this kind can poſſibly be, that they are ſtill eſſentially the ſame; and that the whole hiſtorical tenor of the divine oeconomy towards man has been preſerved in them, without any important alteration, to the preſent time. Take the moſt modern and moſt imperfect tranſcript of their originals, that now exiſts; or even the moſt erroneous copy of the moſt erroneous verſion, that ever was made from them; and you ſhall find in it every thing that is abſolutely neceſſary to conſtitute an authentic writing; and to anſwer all the great purpoſes, for which they were intended *.

* From this acknowledgement, made by all thoſe who have been the foremoſt to detect the corruptions of the Hebrew text, ſome perſons have drawn this ridiculous concluſion; That it is therefore unneceſſary, nay unexpedient, to correct it at all. Since it is allowed, ſay they, to be ſtill eſſentially the ſame, and to contain every thing neceſſary to ſalvation, what need is there to trouble the peace of the world with collations, amendments, &c? The anonymous French author of a ſeries of petulant and declamatory letters, addreſſed to Dr. Kennicott, urges this argument in the following extraordinary manner: "If the great ar-" ticles of the Chriſtian faith are untouched in the text which we already have, why diſturb " the church with corrections and innovations that are of no ſervice to religion? What ad-" vantage will accrue to Chriſtians from knowing, that *Jacob* is written ſometimes with a *vau* " and ſometimes without a *vau?* Or that in the word *David* there was no *jod* before the Ba-" byloniſh captivity? Is the incarnation of Jeſus Chriſt the leſs true for that, &c." No; nor would it be leſs true, if the entire book of Job or the Song of Solomon were wanting. The chain of religion would be uninterrupted without either, yet we ſhould be exceedingly ſorry they were loſt. We can make a ſhift to do without the original text of Eccleſiaſticus; although it is devoutly to be wiſhed that it ſtill exiſted. There were once many pieces of Hebrew ſcripture, of which we have not now even a tranſlation: will it be ſaid that, becauſe the incarnation of Chriſt can be aſcertained without their aid, it would be of no utility to

For beſide the internal marks of genuineneſs, which they ſuper-eminently poſſeſs; they are ſupported by ſuch a continued and cloſely connected chain of external evidence, as is not to be met with in favour of any other compoſition whatever. Who, but the paradoxical Hardouin, ever doubted of the authenticity of Plato's dialogues, or Demoſthenes's orations? yet they have come down to us with not half the number of vouchers, that accompany the Jewiſh writings; and it would be eaſier to find ingenious arguments to prove that *thoſe* were invented by the monks in the thirteenth century, than that *theſe* were fabricated at any particular period.

It is true they have been tranſmitted with many errors, and are at this day extremely incorrect: but, here again, they have an advantage over moſt other writings; the means of correcting them are more obvious and abundant. What theſe are, and how they are to be employed, it is now time to enquire.

The firſt ſource of emendation of any writing is the collation and compariſon of manuſcripts; a ſource but recently opened with reſpect to the Hebrew ſcriptures; and not yet ſo deeply explored, as we hope it will ſoon be.

religion, that they could ſtill be recovered? Every thing muſt be of utility to religion that tends to corroborate the great charters on which it is grounded, or to reſtore them to their original purity, were it but the addition or retrenchment of a ſingle letter. For the reſt, there are few of the amendments propoſed to be made in the Hebrew text from the collation of manuſcripts, of ſo very little importance, as thoſe which this flippant ſuperficial writer has ſelected for the object of his unſeaſonable gibes.

Hebrew manuſcripts are of two ſorts, the one written in the old or Samaritan, the other in the new or Chaldee characters. Theſe are two collateral branches from the ſame ſtem; two copies of the ſame original inſtrument, under the guardianſhip of two different peoples *, jealous of one another, abominating one another; and, therefore, altogether unlikely to enter into any colluſion. Yet, as both copies were the ſame at the beginning, they ſtill remain ſo in all eſſentials; and reciprocally vouch for one another's authenticity. It was the ſaying of St. Auguſtine, that the Jews, through a particular diſpenſation of Providence, were the Chriſtians book-keepers. In like manner, the Samaritans may be ſaid to have been book-keepers to the Jews; and I will venture to affirm, that they have been the beſt keepers of the two. The Samaritan ſcripture, as far as it goes, (for it contains only the Pentateuch) muſt appear to every one, who examines it with any degree of attention, and void of rabbinical prepoſſeſſions, a far more faithful repreſentative of the prototype, than any Maſoretic copy, at this day extant.

It is, indeed, only of late, that we knew the full value of this long latent treaſure. The firſt edition of it was publiſhed by Morinus, in the Paris polyglott, in the year 1645; and only from one manuſcript. The variations of that manuſcript, from the preſent Hebrew text, were reprinted more accurately, by Houbigant, in

* I have ventured, after B. Lowth, to uſe the plural of this word; which in ſome caſes ſeems to be neceſſary, and is perfectly analogous.

1753. Since that time, ſeventeen other manuſcripts have been collated, either in the whole, or in ſelect paſſages; by the aid of which, the greateſt part of the errors, that are in the firſt printed copy, may be corrected; and the futile objections of Hottinger and his followers effectually obviated.

Although the Jewiſh manuſcripts are of leſs utility, in reſtoring the true text, than the Samaritan; having been all written poſteriorly to the introduction of the Maſora; and, for the moſt part, remodelled by the ſame examplar of it; yet they afford many important readings, with regard to the ſenſe; and of grammatical corrections a number almoſt infinite. This laſt advantage alone deſerved all the labour and expence that have been beſtowed in collating them; and the world is principally indebted to the liberality of this nation, and to the indefatigable perſeverance of the late Dr. Kennicott for ſo uſeful a work. The prejudices at firſt raiſed againſt it, by ignorance or miſtaken zeal, are daily dying away; and its value muſt riſe, in the eſtimation of the learned, in proportion as it is known and examined.

Notwithſtanding Dr. Kennicott's various readings were collected from upwards of ſix hundred manuſcripts, and all the printed copies he could procure, yet the harveſt is far from being over. A very large ſupplement is promiſed by De Roſſi of Parma *, from

* The firſt volume was publiſhed laſt year, 1784; and, beſides a very ſenſible preface, canons and *clavis*, contains various readings on the three firſt books of Moſes. The ſecond volume will be publiſhed in the courſe of the preſent year.

more than four hundred manuſcripts, ſome of which are ſaid to be of the ſeventh or eighth century; as well as from a conſiderable number of rare and unnoted editions: and, no doubt, there will be ſtill plentiful gleanings, even after De Roſſi; eſpecially, if ever the repoſitories of the Eaſt happen to be freely opened, and men of learning and enterprize be found to avail themſelves of the occaſion. Meanwhile, let us be heartily thankful for the riches we already poſſeſs, and employ them to the beſt advantage.

A-kin to the various readings of Hebrew manuſcripts, and of much the ſame utility in correcting the Hebrew text, are the parallel places of the text itſelf; and the quotations made from it at different times, whether by Jewiſh or Chriſtian writers *.

By parallel places, we mean thoſe paſſages of Scripture, in which the ſame precept is reiterated; the ſame hiſtorical fact repeated; or the ſame canticle, pſalm or prophecy, entirely or partially reinſerted. When, in any of theſe caſes, there is a manifeſt contradiction, or glaring inconſiſtency, between the two paſſages, we may conclude, that one of them, at leaſt, is corrupted; and it is the province of criticiſm to determine, from circumſtances, where the error and where the truth lies. Examples, not a few, may be ſeen in Houbigant, Kennicott, Starck, &c.

With regard to quotations; if we were ſure, that they had al-

* We ſpeak here only of ſuch quotations as have been made from the original, whether exhibited in Hebrew characters, or in thoſe of any other language.

ways been extracted from books, they might be conſidered as ſo many various readings, of equal eſtimation with thoſe found in manuſcripts of the ſame antiquity; but it may be ſuſpected that they were, ſometimes made from memory; and, therefore, they are to be examined with care, and adopted with caution. It cannot, however, be denied that they are frequently of uſe in reſtoring the true reading; and it were to be wiſhed that a ſtill more ample collection were made of them than has yet been done *.

Another moſt copious ſource of emendation of the Hebrew text, are the tranſlations that have been made of it, at different periods, and in different languages; which, while they ſerve, in general, to evidence its authenticity, enable us, at the ſame time, to correct, or even reſtore many particular paſſages, that are now either entirely loſt or ſtrangely corrupted: an advantage which belongs not, in the ſame degree, to any other ancient writing.

To illuſtrate this by an example—It is well known, that Longinus's celebrated treatiſe on the ſublime has come down to us erroneous and imperfect. But if it had been accurately tranſlated into Latin, while it was yet intire and uncorrupted; and if many

* The various readings in the Talmud and other rabbinical writings were collected with great care by Gill, and inſerted in Dr. Kennicott's Bible. Montfaucon had, long before, gathered what ſcattered fragments of this nature he could find among the Greek and Latin fathers, or in the margin of manuſcript Bibles; and publiſhed them in his Hexapla in 1713. To theſe ſome additions were made by Bahrdt in 1769; and many more might ſtill be made, if ſome new Montfaucon would ariſe, to ranſack old parchments with the ſame induſtry and judgment.

ancient copies of that tranſlation yet remained, it would be no difficult matter to reſtore by them, in a great meaſure, the true ſenſe, if not always the very terms of the text of Longinus. Let us, now, ſuppoſe that, inſtead of one Latin tranſlation, we had three or four; and as many more in Greek, different only in dialect from that of the original; and that all thoſe verſions were not only accurate and faithful, but ſtrictly and even ſervilely literal; in ſuch a caſe, every one muſt be ſenſible, that it would be hard to avoid hitting upon the true text of the author*. That this caſe is fully applicable to the text of the Hebrew ſcriptures will appear from the following conciſe account of the principal ancient verſions.

The firſt of theſe, both in time and dignity, is that which we call the Septuagint or LXX. (it ſhould be LXXII.) from the number of perſons, who, according to ſome of the too credulous ancients, were employed in making it. The moſt judicious critics now laugh, with St. Jerom, at the fable of Ariſteas; yet they are not agreed among themſelves, about many queſtions relative to this famous verſion. Without entering, at preſent, into a diſcuſſion of thoſe knotty points, I ſhall only ſay, in very few words, what appears to me certain, or moſt probable.

* The works of Ariſtotle are much in the ſame predicament with thoſe of Longinus. The beſt Greek editions of them are extremely imperfect, for want of good manuſcripts. But, if we could recover compleat copies of the Syriac and Arabic verſions, which we know were made of them from the originals, it is not to be doubted that many of the erroneous and obſcure paſſages of that uſeful author, would thereby be corrected or illuſtrated. See B. Lowth's preface to Iſaiah.

Firſt then, That the Greek verſion, called the Septuagint, is not all the work of the ſame tranſlator or tranſlators, is manifeſt, from the very great diverſity of ſtile and the various modes of tranſlating, that prevail in it. The arguments from authority, produced in ſupport of the contrary opinion, need no other refutation, than a bare inſpection of the books themſelves: for who, that has ever looked into them, will venture to affirm, that the Pentateuch, Eccleſiaſtes, Amos, and Jeremiah were tranſlated by the ſame perſons? Not to mention that the moſt unexceptionable authorities, thoſe of Joſephus and Philo, are on the other ſide.

Secondly, The Pentateuch, or five books of Moſes, called emphatically the LAW, ſeems to have been tranſlated in the reign, and, probably, at the requeſt of Ptolomy Philadelphus, by certain Jews of Alexandria; aſſiſted, perhaps, by ſome of their brethren from Paleſtine.

Thirdly, The other books were all tranſlated between that period and the birth of Chriſt; or, at leaſt, ſoon after: but where, by whom, or at what particular aera, we can, for the moſt part, form only vague conjectures.

At whatever time, or by whatever perſons the Greek verſion was compleated, it was certainly of great authority among the Helleniſt Jews, and, for a time, read in their ſynagogues inſtead of the Hebrew. To give it the higher degree of credit, and to juſtify an innovation which was not approved of by ſome of their brethren,

the ridiculous tale of the ſeventy cells, &c. ſeems to have been invented. The Chriſtians, who have, in all ages, been more or leſs the dupes of Rabbiniſm, readily believed the ill-contrived ſtory; and thence concluding, that the tranſlators were inſpired perſons, conſidered their work not as a mere verſion, but as a ſecond divine original *.

It was early tranſlated into Latin, and became the text-book of the Weſtern, as well as of the Eaſtern churches. It was the only copy of the Scripture they generally uſed; and the only one they appealed to in all their controverſies. They particularly, and moſt advantageouſly employed it in confuting the Jews themſelves, from whom they had received it; proving to them from it, by the moſt irrefragable arguments, that their expected Meſſias muſt have already come, in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt.

On this, even the Helleniſt Jews began to entertain an unfavourable idea of it; and, at length, had it in ſuch abhorrence, that a national faſt was inſtituted to deplore the ſame event (the anniverſary of its being tranſlated) which they had before commemorated by a ſolemn feſtival. Whether this ſudden change in their minds was altogether owing to the above circumſtance, and their deeply-rooted hatred to the Chriſtians; or whether it might not partly ariſe from the real differences, that were now found (no matter how

* This opinion was the prevailing one as late as the fifth century, and St. Jerom gave great offence by calling it in queſtion.

they had come there) between it and the Hebrew text; or whether, in fine, the Chriſtians, on their part, had, through a miſtaken zeal, made ſome little alterations in it, to make it ſpeak more explicitly the language of Chriſtianity *, it is hard, at this day, to determine: but the fact is indiſputable; and, even before the end of the firſt century, the Septuagint verſion was depreciated by every Jewiſh writer, and expelled from every ſynagogue.

It was to ſupply its place, that Aquila of Pontus, firſt a convert from Paganiſm to Chriſtianity and then a proſelyte to Judaiſm, undertook a new Greek verſion of the Bible for his new brethren. It appeared about the year 129, and was ſo well received by the Jews, that he was encouraged to give, ſoon after, a more correct edition of it, accompanied with a commentary, that rendered it ſtill more palatable to them. On the other hand, the Chriſtians reprobated it as a dangerous and diſingenuous attempt to overthrow the authority of the Septuagint, and charged him with having wilfully corrupted, or miſtranſlated, even his own originals. The character given of him by St. Jerom, in whoſe time his verſion was extant, is not always the ſame. Sometimes † he calls him a contentious and captious interpreter, who affects to weigh words and ſyllables, and crowds his tranſlation with unheard-of ſoleciſms: at other times, ‡ he praiſes his diligence and exactitude; denies that

* Of this I think there is at leaſt one example preſerved by St. Jerom. *Comment. in Habbacuc.*

† Ep. ad Pammach. ‡ Ep. ad Damaſum.

he is ſo captious as he is called; and makes no ſcruple to prefer him to all other tranſlators. To judge from the fragments that now remain, the firſt of theſe opinions is evidently the right one. He is an uncouth, barbarous writer, the Arias Montanus or Malvenda of his day; who ſeems to have purpoſely choſen that ſervile mode of tranſlating, to hide the malevolence of his views, and to make his ſtrict adherence to the letter of the Hebrew a plauſible pretext, for deviating ſo widely from the old verſion. We regret, however, that his tranſlation is loſt, as it would have been ſingularly uſeful both for diſcovering the ſtate of the Hebrew text at that time, and giving us the literal meaning and etymology of many words, the ſignification of which it is now difficult to aſcertain; although, independently of theſe conſiderations, it was hardly worth the ſaving*.

Perhaps the Jews themſelves were ſenſible of the too great ſervility, and conſequent obſcurity, of Aquila's verſion; and therefore wiſhed to have another, that ſhould be equally favourable to their prejudices, without being ſo unintelligible and diſguſting. This, we may ſuppoſe, produced the tranſlation of Theodotion,

* The loſs of this verſion was chiefly owing to a cauſe that ſeemed rather calculated to preſerve it. The Emperor Juſtinian, on forbidding the Talmud, now become the favourite book of the Jews, gave them full leave to uſe the verſion of Aquila, which they had formerly extolled as a faithful and accurate tranſlation: but a ſort of obſtinacy, not entirely peculiar to Jews, urged them not only to reject with contempt what was thus freely offered to them; but even, probably, to deſtroy all the copies they could find of it; and which were moſtly in their own poſſeſſion.

which he publiſhed about the year 184. This writer, who had been firſt a diſciple of Tatian, then a Marcionite, and laſtly a Jew, retained as much of the old Alexandrian verſion, as he ſaw for his purpoſe; and only altered, added, or retrenched, where he found it differ from ſuch Hebrew manuſcripts, as the Jews put into his hands. This was a ſly device, and operated according to his wiſh. The Jews were well pleaſed with his verſion, becauſe it was conformable to their ideas; and the Chriſtians were not offended, becauſe it ſo much reſembled the Septuagint. In many particular paſſages, and in one whole book *, they preferred it to the Septuagint itſelf; eſpecially after Origen had made uſe of it to correct the ſuppoſed faults of the latter; in order to make it tally with, what he thought, the *Hebrew verity*. Hence it is, that much more of this verſion has been preſerved, than of Aquila's.

Towards the end of the ſame century, or early in the next, appeared another Greek tranſlation, leſs literal and infinitely more elegant, than either of the foregoing ones. It was the work of Symmachus; who, if we may believe Euſebius, from being a Samaritan, became a Jew; from being a Jew, a Chriſtian; and from being a Chriſtian, an Ebionite. In this laſt communion, and for the uſe of its members, he compoſed his work, which he afterwards ſeems to have remodelled, in a ſecond edition. The verſion of Symmachus is, often and deſervedly, praiſed by Euſebius and St. Jerom;

* Daniel.

and the latter ſeems to have made it, in a great meaſure, the pattern of his Latin tranſlation. It was, indeed, remarkable for its perſpicuity and propriety, as well as elegance; and no good reaſon can be aſſigned for its not having been more generally adopted, but that its author belonged to a ſect, who were equally hateful to both Jews and Chriſtians. Many excellent works have periſhed from a ſimilar cauſe.

Beſides theſe Greek verſions of the Old Teſtament, there are three others mentioned by the ancient fathers; called the *fifth*, *ſixth*, and *ſeventh*; becauſe their reſpective authors or editors are not known. They ſeem to have comprehended only, or chiefly, the poetical books of Scripture. Whether they were made by Jews or Chriſtians, it is hard to ſay; although the ſixth bears ſtrong marks of Chriſtian extraction; or, perhaps, it was only an interpolated edition of the Septuagint*.

However that be, it is certain that all thoſe verſions were collected by the indefatigable Origen, and placed, together with the Septuagint and original Hebrew text, in his famous Hexapla: and this, perhaps, is the laſt entire copy of them that ever was made. For the Talmudiſts having gradually excluded all Greek verſions from the ſynagogues, and the Chriſtians univerſally adhering to the old tranſlation, the reſt were either totally neglected; or only ſuch parts of them copied into the margents of Bibles and com-

* This may, one day, be the ſubject of a particular diſcuſſion.

mentaries, as were deemed the moſt worthy of attention*. Thus it was that the Septuagint verſion triumphed, at length, over all its rivals, and remained, for ſeveral ages after, the ſole Scripture ſtandard in all the Chriſtian churches †.

We are not, however, to imagine, that it was exactly the ſame in every church, or that any church poſſeſſed a copy of it that was perfectly correct; much leſs, that any ſuch copy now exiſts. It had contracted many blemiſhes in the days of Origen; and it was principally with a view to remove them, that he deſigned and executed the moſt celebrated of all his works. No man could be better qualified for ſuch an undertaking; to a ſtrong conſtitution, a clear head and a moſt prodigious memory, he had joined an immenſe and univerſal erudition, by the moſt aſſiduous and inceſſant application that, perhaps, ever was made. His inſatiable thirſt for learning made him pry into every corner, for rare and curious books; and the liberality of his rich friends put it in his power to purchaſe them.

With all theſe advantages, he begun, about the year 231, to compile his *Tetrapla*; which contained, in ſo many ſeparate co-

* Of all ſuch fragments Montfaucon compoſed his Hexapla; a book indiſpenſibly neceſſary to every Biblical ſtudent; and of which a new and more compleat edition is greatly wanted.

† The reader who wiſhes to form a proper idea of the Septuagint verſion, will do well to conſult Hody *de textibus originalibus*, &c. *Voſſius de* 70 *interpretibus*, Grabe's *Prolegomena* to his edition of the Alexandrian manuſcript, and *De variis vitiis*, &c. Father Simon's *Critical hiſtory of the Old Teſtament*, Fabricy's *Titres primitifs*, and Doctor Owen's excellent *Diſſertation* publiſhed a few years ago.

lumns, and in the following order, the four Greek verſions of Aquila, Symmachus, the Septuagint and Theodotion. It would have been well, perhaps, if he had contented himſelf with this firſt laborious compilation; which was alone ſufficient to immortalize his name, and would have been much more eaſily handed down to poſterity, than the great and over-grown work that ſuperſeded it. It would have been even more uſeful; for as yet he had not aſſumed the province of correcting the text of the Septuagint; but had given it, juſt as he found it, from the beſt manuſcripts he could procure.

But the very conſiderable differences, which he could not but obſerve, between it and the three other verſions, ſo lately made from the originals, and ſo nearly agreeing with one another, made him ſuſpect that it was much more erroneous than he had formerly thought it; and ſet him on meditating a work that ſhould, both by its magnitude and importance, totally eclipſe the former one. This produced, in ſucceſſion, the *Hexapla*, *Octapla* and *Enneapla*; ſo denominated from the number of columns, that each contained. In the *Enneapla*, which had nine columns, the three laſt contained the three anonymous Greek verſions before-mentioned; the four, immediately preceding them, were the ſame with thoſe of the *Tetrapla*; and, in the two firſt, ſtood the original text in Hebrew letters, with its pronounciation by its ſide in Greek characters: both, ſuch as he received them from the Jews: for his knowledge

of the Hebrew was, by far, too ſcanty, to enable him to do without them; and he never ſuſpected, that they might, poſſibly, impoſe upon him; any more than St. Jerom did, afterwards, on a like occaſion.

Emboldened by his new guides, he ventured now to *ſlaſh with his deſperate hook* the venerable texture of the old verſion; and to patch and piece it, with the more recent manufacture of Theodotion, much in the ſame manner as Clarius and ſome other moderns have patched the Vulgate *. This had bad conſequences. The great authority of Origen made every one, who was poſſeſſed of a Greek Bible, reviſe his copy by the Hexaplar ſtandard; and, in a ſhort time, no manuſcript, that was not briſtled over with aſteriſks and obeliſks, lemniſks and hypolemniſks, was accounted of any value.

If the autograph of Origen ſtill remained, or if the art of printing had then exiſted, to circulate at once a great number of accurate copies, we ſhould have leſs reaſon to complain of the confuſion that thence enſued. His diſtinguſhing marks, without adulterating the Septuagint, would have indicated the then ſtate of the Hebrew text, and put it in our power, even at this day, to appretiate both †: whereas, through the careleſsneſs of ignorant tranſcri-

* *Sed, quod majoris audaciae eſt, in editione Septuaginti Theodotionis editionem miſcuit.* Hieron. praef. in Paralip.

† *Et haec quidem ſigna, ſi ſtudioſe ſemper a librariis ſervata eſſent in manuſcriptis, non exiguum inde fructum caperet Critica ſacra; at mox, pro librariorum ſocordia et negligentia, omiſſa ſunt; unde maxima in libris Graecis orta eſt confuſio.* Starck, *Davidis Carm.* vol. 1. p. 152.

bers, or the caprice of future correctors, the diſorder grew every day greater and greater; until, at length, it became irremediable.

For other perſons, leſs capable than Origen or his editors Pamphilus and Euſebius, ſet about correcting the *common* * copies, after their example. The principal of theſe were Lucianus and Heſychius, whoſe authority, whatever might be their abilities, vied almoſt equally with Origen's. The exemplar corrected by Lucianus was uſed in all the churches from Antioch to Conſtantinople. At Alexandria, and all over Egypt, the corrections of Heſychius were adopted; while the Chriſtians of Paleſtine ſtuck tenaciouſly to the Pamphilian copy of the Hexapla †; which, in the end, ſeems to have generally prevailed through all the Eaſt.

From which of thoſe copies, or editions, the particular manuſcripts, now extant in different parts of the world, are derived; and what manuſcript deviates leaſt from the old original verſion, it is impoſſible to determine, or even to gueſs, until the manuſcripts themſelves be collated and compared. This is, at preſent, the greateſt *deſideratum* in ſacred philology; and had the Author of this Proſpectus a fortune ſufficient to travel for that purpoſe, he would think it well employed, were it equal to that of Croeſus: nor ſhould his preſent undertaking, great as it is, prevent him from execut-

* The uncorrected edition of the Septuagint was, after the days of Origen, known by the name of *common*, κοινὴ as we call, now, the Latin verſion of Jerom, the Vulgate.

† Hieron. ad Chromat. cvii.

ing a project ſo nearly connected with it; and from which it would, undoubtedly, derive a greater degree of perfection *. Meanwhile, we muſt make the beſt uſe we can of the printed editions, and of ſuch various readings of manuſcripts as we can procure: not neglecting even the ſecondary tranſlations that have any degree of antiquity †.

We have four different edited exemplars of the Greek verſion; That of Alcala or the Complutenſian, that of Venice or the Aldine, that of Rome, and that of Oxford.

The firſt was printed in the polyglott Bible of Ximenes in the year 1515, with a typothetical attention, that would put the moſt patient modern compoſitor in a rage. It is accompanied with an

* I have been told that a very learned gentleman of the Univerſity of Cambrige had, ſome time ago, expreſſed his readineſs to undertake ſuch a work, if he ſhould meet with due encouragement. Is it poſſible that he has not, or will not meet with due encouragement, in a country, where the moſt trifling novelty draws, every ſeaſon, from the purſes of the good people of England, a far greater ſum than would be adequate to the purpoſe? With five thouſand pounds, I would, undertake, in leſs than three years, to collate every valuable Greek manuſcript of the Bible in Europe.

† Great hopes are entertained of being able, in ſome meaſure, to reſtore Origen's copy of the Septuagint, together with the other Greek verſions that compoſed his Tetrapla; by means of a Syriac verſion, made from them in the ſeventh century; a conſiderable part of which is preſerved in the Ambroſian library at Milan. It contains the Prophets and *Agiographa*. The firſt part of this manuſcript is, with great probability, ſaid to have been once in the poſſeſſion of Maſius; and from it he drew his Hexaplar readings, in his commentary on Joſhua: but what is ſince become of it, no one, it ſeems, can tell. Even then it had been mutilated of the Pentateuch; of which, however, there is an Arabic verſion, in the Bodleian library at Oxford. May we not expect the publication of this Pentateuch, from the zeal and abilities of the preſent Arabic Profeſſor? That, with Mr. Norberg's tranſcript from the Ambroſian volume, would be a moſt valuable preſent to the Biblical ſtudent. See Profeſſor White's letter to the Biſhop of London; or Bp. Newcome's preface to the minor Poets.

interlineary verbal tranſlation, and is of all the Greek editions the moſt conſonant with the preſent Hebrew text. The editors boaſt of ancient manuſcripts, and ancient manuſcripts they ſurely had; but, as they neither tell what thoſe were, nor how they uſed them, we draw little ſatisfaction from this general information. It is even juſtly ſuſpected, that they did not ſcrupulouſly adhere to ſuch manuſcripts as they had; but that, to make their edition correſpond, as nearly as poſſible, with the Hebrew and Vulgate, with which it was claſſed in the ſame page, they gleaned from every quarter a medley of a verſion, that was neither one thing nor another. It is aſtoniſhing that ſuch a copy ſhould have been republiſhed in the Antwerp and Paris polyglotts.

The edition of Venice was firſt publiſhed in the year 1518, by the heirs of Aldus. It was profeſſedly printed from very old, but undeſcribed manuſcripts; with which however its editors ſeem not to have taken the ſame freedom, as thoſe of Alcala had taken with theirs. It is, evidently a much purer copy of the Septuagint; although not without many foreign admixtures; eſpecially from Theodotion. It has been often reprinted, with variations and pretended corrections; ſometimes for the worſe. The beſt editions of it, beſide that of Venice, are thoſe of Baſil and Frankfort.

The Roman edition, begun in the pontificate of Gregory XIII. and compleated in that of Sixtus V. (who while a cardinal had preſſingly urged the work) appeared in the year 1587. It was prin-

cipally taken from the famous Vatican manuſcript; and, where it failed, from others of nearly the ſame antiquity; and is, by many, thought to be the moſt genuine copy of the old Greek verſion, that has yet been publiſhed. Had the learned editors been more attentive, to exhibit their prototypes exactly as they found them; we ſhould have been ſtill better pleaſed with their labours: for it is now certain, that they ſometimes deviated from their manuſcripts; but uncertain, where and how much they deviated. It has been lately propoſed to the preſent Pope, to have the Vatican manuſcript republiſhed, exactly as it is; and even in the ſame form and characters; and it is with the greateſt pleaſure we learn that his Holineſs has not only approved of the propoſal, but has alſo taken upon himſelf the whole expence of the impreſſion. This does great honour to Pius VI. and will contribute more to immortalize his memory, than any other event of his reign; his journey to Vienna not excepted *.

The Roman edition, together with Nobilius's Latin verſion, firſt ſeparately publiſhed in the year 1588, was, by order and at the expence of the Gallican clergy, reprinted at Paris, under the inſpection of Morinus, in the year 1626; and again in 1641. We are

* We are juſt now informed, but hope the information is falſe, that this moſt laudable deſign has been traverſed by the Roman inquiſitors; and that, through the councils of a Greek bigot, the Vatican manuſcripts are, in future, to lie on their duſty ſhelves, untouched and unexplored. If this be true, Ghoſts of Caraſa, Paſſionei, Spinelli, Aſſemanni, ariſe! and drive theſe Goths and Vandals from the precincts of your old dominion.

certainly indebted to the zeal of the French Biſhops for procuring ſo elegant and correct an edition of a book that had become extremely rare, and was hardly to be purchaſed: but the obligation is conſiderably diminiſhed, if it be true, as Serravius and others affirm, that this edition prevented Ducaeus from giving the infinitely more uſeful one he meditated *.

When Walton publiſhed the London polyglott in the year 1657, he judiciouſly adopted the Roman edition of the Greek verſion, inſtead of the Complutenſian; and this, with other things, contributed to give his polyglott a decided ſuperiority over all the reſt. It was alſo republiſhed at Francker by Bos in the year 1709, in one thick quarto volume; and again at Utrecht and Amſterdam by Millius in 1728, in two volumes, ſmall octavo.—All the other editions of London, Cambridge, Amſterdam, Leipſick, &c, are ſpurious, and moſt groſsly interpolated.

The laſt, but not the leaſt important, edited exemplar of the Septuagint, is that which was printed from the celebrated Alexandrian manuſcript in the Britiſh Muſaeum; of equal antiquity with that of the Vatican, and, in ſome reſpects, more valuable.

* Fronto Ducaeus (Fronton le Duc) a Jeſuit of Bourdeaux, the moſt learned editor of the firſt Greek and Latin Chryſoſtome, and one of the beſt critics of his age, had planned, it ſeems, a new edition of the Septuagint; in which it was his intention to reſtore, if poſſible, the genuine exemplar of Origen, with all its diacritic marks: but the Pariſian editors of the Roman exemplar, alarmed at the project, which would in effect have impeded the ſale of their copies, did all they could to counteract it, and were unluckily but too ſucceſsful. The materials which he had prepared were ordered to Rome, and have never ſince been heard of.

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It was prepared for the preſs by Grabe, with a care and candor that have not often been equalled, never ſurpaſſed; but which, we truſt, will be henceforth faithfully imitated by every editor of manuſcripts. The firſt and fourth volumes were, by Grabe himſelf, publiſhed at Oxford in folio and octavo in the years 1707 and 1709; the ſecond and third by Lee and Shippen, with the aſſiſtance of Biſhop Potter in 1719—20. It was immediately republiſhed at Leipſick by Reineccius, in 1712, &c; but the moſt commodious edition of it is that of Zurick, by Breitinger, in 1730. Until the Romans are pleaſed to give us more correct copy of their manuſcript, this edition muſt be our text-book of the Greek verſion; and all future collations of manuſcripts ſhould be made relatively to it *.

With regard to the various readings already collated, the greateſt part of which have been crowded together in the lower margin of Bos's edition, they are not implicitly to be depended on; even when extracted from printed books. In every dubious paſſage, the editions themſelves are to be conſulted, and the typographical errors of theſe always taken into conſideration. Of manuſcripts, indeed, few general and continued collations have yet been made. The variations of the very ancient Cottonian fragment, now loſt, were carefully collated by Grabe, and accurately publiſhed by Dr.

* Profeſſor White of Oxford, ſo well known by his elegant and affecting lectures, has in a letter to the Biſhop of London, in 1779, laid down ſome excellent rules for having a good new edition of the Septuagint; a work very much wanted; and which we wiſh the learned profeſſor's other avocations would permit him to undertake.

Owen in the year 1778: Dr. Kennicott had collated for his own uſe ſeveral parts of the principal manuſcripts at Oxford, and of an old Pſaltery at Eton: it is hoped they are not loſt *. Mr. Woide, at the requeſt of Biſhop Lowth, collated, through the book of Iſaiah, two valuable manuſcripts in the Britiſh Muſaeum; one of them, through Jeremiah, for Mr. Blayney; and through the minor Prophets, for B. Newcome. The Author of this Proſpectus hopes to procure, both at home and abroad, ſome ſimilar aſſiſtance †; and we expect ſoon to hear of Birch and Adler having publiſhed their copious collections.

It has been ſaid, that we ought not to neglect the ancient verſions, that have been made from the Septuagint. Of theſe the moſt celebrated is the Latin *Italic*, which chiefly prevailed in all the Weſtern churches during the five firſt centuries. If an entire and unadulterated copy of this verſion exiſted, it would be little leſs valuable than the Septuagint itſelf. What parts of it could be found have been collected by Nobilius, Blanchini and Sabbatier.

There are alſo Syriac, Samaritan, Ethiopic, Arabic and Armenian tranſlations from the Greek, partly printed, but chiefly in

* I have, ſince writing this, been aſſured by the Biſhop of Saliſbury, to whom and the Dean of Chriſt-church Dr. Kennicott left his papers, that no ſuch collections are found among them.

† While theſe ſheets are printing, I am actually employed in collating a valuable and well-preſerved Octateuch, belonging to the Univerſity of Glaſgow; a particular account of which ſhall in due time be given to the public.

manuſcript; which have their reſpective uſes, towards the ſame purpoſe, according to their antiquity and accuracy, and certainly deſerve to be made known and appretiated.

But of all the verſions made from the Septuagint the Coptic is by far the moſt uſeful; both becauſe it is a ſtrictly verbal tranſlation, and becauſe it is of great antiquity. Wilkins publiſhed the Pentateuch from three manuſcripts in the year 1731. But much, much yet remains to be done; and the arduous taſk ſeems to be reſerved for Mr. Woide. He is, perhaps, the only man in Europe, who is fully equal to it; and when he has compleated the ſingular work he has now in hand *, he will, no doubt, be encouraged to ſet about it †.

Having ſaid this much on the different Greek verſions of the Bible ‡, and of their utility in reſtoring the true readings of the original text, we proceed to the other ancient tranſlations; at the head of which is to be placed the Syriac.

That the Syrians had a verſion of the ſcripture, at a very early

* A *Fac-ſimile* of the New Teſtament of the Alexandrian manuſcript; the moſt curious piece of workmanſhip that ever came from the preſs, now happily compleated.

† He has, with unremitted induſtry, already procured ſeveral Coptic fragments; and expects more from the friendſhip of the prelate Borgia, the preſent moſt learned and amiable preſect of the *Propaganda*; whoſe zeal to diſcover, and readineſs to communicate uſeful old writings of every kind, are perfectly congenial to Mr. Woide's own diſpoſition.

‡ Mr. Villoiſon diſcovered lately a Greek verſion of the Bible, in St. Mark's library at Venice, entirely different from that of the Septuagint; but, as it has not yet been publiſhed, we cannot form a proper judgment of it. It has, however, all the appearance of being a much more modern tranſlation, than even that of Symmachus.

period, is indiſputable; although the tradition, that carries it back to the reign of Solomon, deſerves no credit. As it is mentioned by the Greek writers of the ſecond century, it muſt have been then generally known; and may, therefore, without temerity, be aſcribed to the apoſtolic age. Hence it is evident, that a genuine copy of it would be highly valuable; as it would, not only point out the changes which the Hebrew text may have undergone, from the time it had been firſt tranſlated into Greek; but, alſo, ſerve to corroborate many good readings, and correct many bad ones, of both the Greek tranſlation, and the Hebrew original. In this laſt reſpect, it would be more uſeful than any other verſion. Of all the Oriental dialects, the Syriac approaches the nigheſt to the Hebrew; and the Syriac tranſlator follows his text ſo cloſely and literally, that he may be ſaid to give a tranſcript, rather than a tranſlation. But his work has had the fate of all ancient books: it has come down to us greatly disfigured, by the negligence of copyiſts, and the audacity of pretended correctors. It was publiſhed, not very faithfully, by Gabriel Sionita, in the Paris polyglott, from a manuſcript in the French king's library. The editors of the London polyglott had it partly corrected on three other exemplars: but it is ſtill exceedingly faulty *, and a collation of it with all the manuſcripts that can be found, and with the writings of the ancient Syriac fathers, is ex-

* Several letters of the Syriac alphabet are more eaſily miſtaken for one another, than even thoſe of the Hebrew; and this has been one moſt fertile ſource of errors.

tremely deſirable. I have hopes, that the gentlemen of the Maronite college at Rome may be prevailed upon to undertake a conſiderable ſhare of ſo uſeful a work *.

Of much the ſame affinity of idiom to the Hebrew with the Syriac, are the Chaldee verſions; made for the uſe of the Jews, after the Hebrew had ceaſed to be a living language. Theſe are of various ſorts and different qualities, from the ſervile tranſlation to the looſeſt paraphraſe; and from an almoſt pure Babyloniſh dialect to the moſt barbarous rabbinical jargon. They are not, conſequently, all of the ſame utility: yet the very worſt of them will be found to have its uſe; and, even from the dunghill of the Jeruſalem Targum, a pearl may be here and there picked up. The moſt ancient and accurate is that of Onkelos, who tranſlated only the Pentateuch. From a reſemblance of name, he has been confounded with Aquila, the author of the Greek verſion. The Rabbins, indeed, will have their Onkelos to be much more ancient; but there is ſome reaſon to think he muſt have been of a ſtill latter date. Be that as it may, he ſticks cloſely to his text; which, it is evident, could not, in many places, be the ſame with our preſent Maſoretic copies. Next to him in rank, but at a great diſtance, ſtands Jonathan with his Targums. The reſt are an obſcure and anonymous herd; who ſeem to vie with one another, which ſhall advance the greateſt abſurdi-

* See the note † page 34.

ties. The leaſt ridiculous among them are they, who paraphraſed the Pſalms and Proverbs.

Although the Arabic verſions, at leaſt ſuch of them as have been made from the Hebrew, are of a much latter period than the other Oriental tranſlations; and, therefore, not of the ſame utility for correcting the originals; yet we cannot ſubſcribe to the opinion of thoſe, who think them of little or no uſe at all, for that purpoſe. The verſion of Saadias * is as old as the tenth century; and exhibits a faithful though not verbal tranſlation of the Hebrew copies he worked upon. I have found ſome excellent readings in it; and I wonder that Houbigant ſhould have preferred to it the novel and barbarous African verſion publiſhed by Erpenius. The African verſion, however, is not without its uſe. Being extremely literal, it gives us a good idea of the ſtate of the Hebrew text, at the time of its being made; and furniſhes us with many etymological helps to diſcover the meaning of obſcure Hebrew words. But a more valuable Arabic verſion than either of theſe, made from the Samaritan Pentateuch, lies yet in manuſcript; of which a ſpecimen from the Barberini triglott was publiſhed by Hwiid in the year 1780.

* I do not here enter into a diſcuſſion of thoſe much agitated queſtions. Whether the Arabic verſion in our polyglotts be a primary or a ſecondary tranſlation? whether Saadias-Gaon be the ſame with Saïd of Fiumi? or whether he tranſlated only the Pentateuch? Theſe points will probably be the ſubject of a particular diſſertation. It is enough for me at preſent, that the Arabic verſion has, partly at leaſt, been certainly either made from, or retouched upon the originals.

There are ſeveral other copies of it in Europe; and we join our warmeſt wiſhes to thoſe of F. Georgi *, that the joint labours of the learned of all countries and communions may ſoon give us a compleat edition of it. Let F. Georgi himſelf ſet the example by procuring a collation of the manuſcripts of Italy; which in his preſent ſtation, he can eaſily do†. The reſt ſeems to be deſtined for Woide or Maldenhover ‡.

We come now to the famous Latin Vulgate, which, for eleven hundred years, was the general text-book of all the Weſtern churches; and is ſtill the public Scripture ſtandard, in thoſe of the Roman communion. The firſt Latin verſions of the Bible were made from the Greek of the Septuagint, and as the Greek copies greatly varied, the Latin verſions varied ſtill more; becauſe they were not only done from different architypes, but alſo by many different hands: for every one, ſays St. Auguſtine, who had got a tincture of Greek learning, fell to tranſlating for himſelf; ſo that before the end of the fourth century, the tranſlations had become innumerable ‖.

To remedy this glaring inconvenience, St. Jerom undertook to

* See his elegant letter to Hwiid, printed with the above ſpecimen.

† I believe he is now General of the order of Dominican Friars.

‡ I am juſt now told that this gentleman, well known for his German tranſlation of Job, has already collated ſome of the Arabic manuſcripts at Oxford; and continues to enrich his collection from other libraries, particularly thoſe of Spain.

‖ See St. Auguſtine *De doctrina Chriſtiana*, lib. ii. cap. 2.

reviſe that which was chiefly uſed, and known by the name of *Italic*, on the moſt correct copies of the Greek. Having now occaſion to conſult the works of Origen he ſoon perceived that the Greek itſelf was in many places corrupted; or, at leaſt, that it differed widely from the Greek verſions, that had been more recently made from the Hebrew; and this it probably was, that gave him the firſt idea of the neceſſity of a new tranſlation. For that purpoſe, he applied eagerly to the ſtudy of the Hebrew language, conſulted the moſt learned of the Jewiſh doctors, compared all the Greek verſions with one another and with the original; and, at length, convinced of the inſufficiency of the old Latin verſion, even with all his own corrections and improvements, he ſeriouſly ſet about making a new one, from the beſt Hebrew copies he could procure. This he accompliſhed at different intervals, and rather by ſtarts than a continued labour, in the ſpace of fifteen years; amidſt many contradictions, reproaches, and the moſt bitter invectives.

For ſcarcely had his firſt eſſays made their appearance, when the cry from every quarter was ſet up againſt them, as a daring and dangerous innovation; that tended to diſcredit a verſion ſo long uſed in the Latin church, and made from one generally believed to have been the work of the Holy Ghoſt.

Although Jerom, conſcious of the rectitude of his intentions and of the goodneſs of his cauſe, deſpiſed, at firſt, the unjuſt and

invidious cavils of his adverſaries; yet they were ſo often repeated, and countenanced by ſuch high characters in the church, that he was fain to yield to the neceſſity of the times, and to make apology after apology for his conduct. Still, however, he continued to tranſlate, without following any other order than what the requeſts of his particular friends occaſionally ſuggeſted to him. The four books of Kings were firſt publiſhed in the year 391; ſoon after followed the Prophets; then the books of Solomon, Job, the Pſalms, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles; and, laſt of all, the Octateuch *, about the year 405. By this time, the ſtorm, that had been raiſed againſt him, was nearly blown over; and he lived to ſee his labours applauded by ſome of thoſe who had been the firſt to condemn them. In leſs than a century after his death his verſion had become of equal authority with its now only rival, the Italic; and gradually grew in eſtimation, till, at length, it was, with ſome limitations, univerſally adopted by the Latin churches.

In many reſpects it deſerved that preference. It had been made immediately from the original, by one who had every neceſſary qualification for ſuch an undertaking. His learning, whether ſacred or profane, was not leſs extenſive than Origen's; his judgment and taſte were more correct and exquiſite. He had a perfect knowledge of the Greek and Latin languages; and was ſufficiently ver-

* The five books of Moſes, Joſhua, Judges and Ruth.

ſed in the Hebrew *. He had correct copies of the Hexapla, if not the autograph itſelf, before him. He was at no great diſtance from a famous ſchool of Jewiſh Rabbins, whom he might conſult as he ſaw occaſion. He had traverſed the land with his own feet, and ſeen with his own eyes the principal places mentioned in ſacred hiſtory. He was acquainted with the manners and cuſtoms of the country. He knew its plants, its animals and its other productions. With all theſe advantages, and his ſuperior talents, it was impoſſible he ſhould not ſucceed. He adopted, in general, that mode of tranſlating, which had been before ſo much admired in Symmachus; and which, indeed, is the beſt calculated to expreſs the full meaning of the original, without either hurting its integrity, or transferring its idiotiſms. His ſtile is plain, eaſy and unaffected; and, although his Latinity is not that of the Auguſtan age, it is neither barbarous nor inelegant. In his diction and phraſeology there is a peculiar grace and noble ſimplicity, which it is not eaſy to imitate; and which no other Latin verſion, except that of Houbigant, in any degree poſſeſſes.

The work of St. Jerom is not, however, completely perfect: alas! what work of man ever was? He frequently renders not all his text,

* St. Jerom's great knowledge of the Hebrew has been called in queſtion by Le Clerc, and warmly aſſerted by Martianay and others; who, in their zeal for the honour of the holy doctor, forgot, ſometimes, the rules of good breeding. Le Clerc's aſſertions were to be combated by reaſonings, not by injuries. St. Jerom certainly knew more of the Hebrew language than any other Weſtern Chriſtian of his day: he knew much more than Origen; but he was inferior, in that reſpect, to many moderns.

he ſometimes gives more than it contains, and he not ſeldom miſtakes its meaning. For the ſake of perſpicuity he is often too diffuſe, and for the ſake of brevity he is ſometimes obſcure. He changes proper names into appellatives, and appellatives into proper names. He makes improper diviſions of colons and periods; and, on ſome occaſions, he is either careleſs or haſty *. Add to this, that he ſeems not to have been always guided by the ſame rules of tranſlating. Hence, there is a remarkable want of uniformity throughout: ſome parts being tranſlated more, others leſs literally; and ſome even bordering on paraphraſe. But ſtill the greateſt imperfection of St. Jerom's verſion ariſes from too great a confidence in his Jewiſh guides, and from his being prepoſſeſt with an idea, that the Hebrew copies were then abſolutely faultleſs. This leads him to blame the Septuagint in many places, where they are not blameable, and where they read and render better than he. But whatever little original flaws may be in this jewel, it is ſtill a gem of great value; and we are perfectly agreed with F. Fabricy, as to the propriety and importance of hav-

* It is aſtoniſhing with what rapidity he ſtruck off his tranſlations. The three books of Solomon he calls "the works of three days." That of Tobias he finiſhed in one, although he had it to tranſlate out of a language he did not well know, through the medium of another that was more familiar to him. Such diſpatch in a modern tranſlator would be deemed downright precipitation. But this circumſtance, while it accounts for ſome negligences and overſights, is the ſtrongeſt proof of his comprehenſive genius, quick conceptions, and the moſt wonderful facility in writing that has ever been known. Eraſmus, perhaps, came the nigheſt to him in all theſe reſpects.

ing the dirt and ſtraws, that have in the courſe of time ſtuck to it and obſcured its luſtre, effectually wiped away. This can be done only by a collation of manuſcripts, and I know no body of men more proper to undertake the work, than the learned of F. Fabricy's own order.

When the Weſtern churches adopted St. Jerom's verſion, they did not adopt it without reſerve. Many particular parts and ſome whole books of the Italic were ſtill retained; and ſeveral corrections from Aquila, Theodotion and Symmachus, as well as from the Maſoretic Hebrew were occaſionally introduced. This medley obtained, from its general reception, the name of Vulgate.

It has undergone many corrections and alterations at different periods. Towards the end of the eighth century it was reviſed by Alcuin at the deſire of Charlemagne. In the twelfth it was, with the aſſiſtance of ſome Jews, made more conformable to the Hebrew by Stephen abbot of Citeaux *. It was again, in the next age, corrected with great care and labour by the French Dominicans; and enriched with a number of various readings, not only from Latin manuſcripts, but alſo from the Hebrew and Greek copies †. This moſt uſeful work, by that conjunctive and ſubordinate induſ-

* Ciſtertium.

† The autograph of this *correctorium* is to be ſeen in the library of the Dominicans, *ruë St. Jacques*, Paris. A good account of it is given by Fabricy (Titres primitifs tom. II. p. 132.) It is to be regretted that the project of making a fair copy of it, formed in 1749, did not take place; though it is not doubted but it will be reſumed and executed in the beſt manner.

try that diſtinguiſhes religious ſocieties, was ſoon multiplied or abridged over all the Order; and was conſidered as a ſort of canon to correct other manuſcripts by.

Whether they, who gave the firſt printed edition at Mayence in the year 1462, uſed it; or what manuſcript ſerved them for an architype, it is not known. One thing is certain; the firſt printed editions are extremely faulty. That which was publiſhed in the year 1515, in the Complutenſian polyglott, is more correct than any that preceded it; but as the corrections were not always made on the authority of manuſcripts, and as the editors have not told us what other ſources they drew from, we read it with doubt and diſtruſt. The firſt who gave a good copy of the Vulgate was the celebrated Robert Stevens. All his editions are correct and beautiful; but that of 1540 is ſuperlatively ſo. It was made from fourteen deſcribed manuſcripts, and the three principal printed editions of Mayence, Baſil and Alcala. It was republiſhed with ſome alterations by Hentennius in 1547; with various readings from thirty manuſcripts; which are accurately deſcribed. Hentennius's edition was improved by Lucas Brugenſis; and publiſhed, with his long promiſed annotations, in 1580; and again, more ſplendidly, in 1583 *.

Seventeen years were now elapſed ſince the Council of Trent had

* Of the ſame year, there is an elegant and commodious edition of it in ſmall octavo. Both are by Plantin.

decreed the Vulgate to be an authentic copy of Scripture; and ordered it to be henceforth (excluſively of all other Latin verſions) univerſally uſed and appealed to. The charge of having it carefully corrected, and accurately printed, was committed to the Roman Pontif; but little had been done during the troubleſome reigns of Pius IV. and Pius V. ſo that Sixtus V. who was born for great things, had the honour of executing the great commiſſion. He had already, as has been ſaid, given an excellent edition of the Greek verſion of the Septuagint, in 1587; and he now gave, in 1590 * the firſt entire Latin Bible that was publiſhed by papal authority.

But neither papal authority itſelf, nor the anathemas denounced againſt thoſe who ſhould preſume to alter the ſmalleſt particle of it, could procure it a long duration. The imperious and unpopular Sixtus was hardly cold in his grave, when the copies of his edition were called in and ſuppreſſed †; and a new one, with above two thouſand alterations, was publiſhed, in 1592, by Clement VIII. of which all the other editions, that have ſince been made, are literal copies ‡.

* The bull of publication is dated in 1589, but the book was not made public till the year after.

† It was pretended that Sixtus himſelf had reſolved on the ſuppreſſion; but of this there is no proof, and little probability.

‡ When I ſay *literal* copies, I do not mean that there have been no changes made in the Vulgate, ſince the Clementine edition. It is well known that many little corrections, and

As to the reſpective merits of thoſe two editions, the laſt is certainly more correct and more agreeable to the preſent copies of the originals; but the firſt ſeems to retain more of the old Vulgate, and to be better ſupported by the authority of manuſcripts *. This was probably one of the reaſons that induced the Clementine editors to exclude all various readings. Bellarmine was for giving them; but he was over-ruled by his fellow-labourers †. The omiſſion was partly ſupplied in ſome poſterior editions; but the

amendments that had been pointed out by Bellarmine and others, have from time to time been admitted, even into the Vatican impreſſions; and thence have found their way into moſt other poſterior editions.

* Dr. James, in his *Bellum Papale*, made a minute and invidious collation of the two editions of Sixtus and Clement; from which he and others have drawn concluſions not very favourable to the Roman See. But when the very moſt they aſk is granted them, and when it is allowed that neither of the editions are faultleſs, does it follow that the Vulgate is not ſtill a moſt reſpectable tranſlation; or that the council were in the wrong to prefer it to all other Latin verſions, that had yet appeared? I ſhall have frequent occaſions to juſtify it againſt the cavils of Amana and other ſuch ſupercilious and contentious critics; and to ſhew that it is, in many particular paſſages, a more genuine copy of Scripture than the preſent Maſoretic text. Indeed the outragious attacks, made on this famous verſion by ſome, not the moſt judicious, Proteſtant writers, may have, partly, ariſen from a deſire of retorting on ſuch indiſcreet Catholics, as had thrown unmerited abuſe on the original. At preſent, the learned of both ſides are in a fair way of being reconciled, in this one point at leaſt; and ſeem willing to make mutual conceſſions. The Catholics are ready to own that the Vulgate is not ſo pure a rivulet, as ſome of their too zealous predeceſſors maintained; and the Proteſtants as readily acknowledge that the preſent Hebrew text is not ſo untainted a ſource as was long believed. Thus both contribute, in different ways, towards a reeſtabliſhment of the true text. Thoſe without heſitation correct the Vulgate by the original, where the Vulgate is evidently faulty; and theſe make no ſcruple to make uſe of the Vulgate in reſtoring the true text of the original, when the original is evidently or probably corrupted.

† See his letter to Lucas Brugenſis.

moſt ample and valuable collection was publiſhed at Antwerp by Lucas Brugenſis in the year 1618: and has ſince been frequently republiſhed, although never ſo correctly. Of latter years, ſince the collation of manuſcripts has been revived, ſome of the beſt Biblical critics have occaſionally had recourſe to thoſe of the Vulgate; and many good readings have been ſelected from them in particular books and paſſages. But a more general collation is ſtill wanted. When that has been accompliſhed, we doubt not but ſome zealous pope will ſee the expediency of having the Clementine edition again reviſed, and made more ſtrictly conformable to the originals, wherever there is no well grounded ſuſpicion of their being corrupted.

A third ſource of emendation of the Hebrew text of the Old Teſtament, are the quotations from it in the New. Theſe by ſome are ranked with the parallel places above-mentioned, to which indeed they have a great affinity. They differ, however, in the following reſpects. Firſt, they are in a different language. Secondly, they are not always made from the original; but more frequently from the Septuagint; and often, probably, from other early verſions. Thirdly, they are ſometimes quoted in ſo vague a manner, that we are at a loſs to know whence they were taken; or whether they were meant as ſtrict quotations, or ſimple inferences. As a ſource of emendation, therefore, they are to be uſed with great circumſpection; and the various readings, that may ſeem to ariſe from them,

are rarely to be adopted; and not till every circumſtance has been weighed with an equal and patient hand. With theſe precautions, they may be of conſiderable uſe; and we are greatly obliged to Dr. Randolph, for giving us ſo accurate a collation of them with the Hebrew text and Septuagint verſion. It was publiſhed at Oxford, with his learned annotations, in the year 1782.

The writings of Philo and Joſephus, the two principal Jewiſh authors of antiquity, after thoſe of the Scripture, have alſo been reckoned among the ſources from which ſome corrections of the Hebrew text may be drawn. The former, who was cotemporary with Jeſus Chriſt, cites, indeed, many paſſages of Holy writ; but as he was an Helleniſt of Alexandria, and evidently but little acquainted with the Hebrew dialect, we may ſuppoſe he followed the Septuagint; and therefore, although his quotations are uſeful, for corroborating or correcting the readings of that verſion, they can be but of ſecond hand utility towards the amendment of the original.

Not ſo with regard to Joſephus. He has given us a continued hiſtory of the Jews, extracted from the Hebrew copies of their own canonical books; and, at firſt, partly written by him in the Hebrew language. Now, although it is not improbable that he had alſo before him the Septuagint verſion, when he compoſed his Greek hiſtory, we cannot ſuppoſe that he would, on any account, prefer it to his originals; and the only fair concluſion we can draw from

his diſagreeing with our preſent Hebrew text, where he agrees with the Septuagint, is that our preſent Hebrew text and his Hebrew text are not the ſame: conſequently, where he depoſes againſt the preſent text in favour of the Septuagint, there is great reaſon to ſuſpect that the former is corrupted. I ſay, reaſon to ſuſpect; for it by no means amounts to a certain proof; both becauſe the texts of Joſephus and of the Septuagint have their corruptions too; and becauſe there is a probability, at leaſt, of ſuch copies, as we now have of the one having been in ſome places retouched, and made agreeable to thoſe of the other. It is pretty plain, however, that this is not always the caſe; and it has been clearly ſhewn by Kennicott and others that the work of Joſephus is often a uſeful commentary, ſometimes a good *correctorium* of the Hebrew ſcriptures—Let me add, that it forms a precious link in the long chain of evidence, that ſupports their authenticity.

In fine, when the corruptions of the text cannot be removed, either by the collation of manuſcripts, or the aid of verſions, internal analogy or external teſtimony; the laſt reſource is conjectural criticiſm.—"Conjectural criticiſm!" exclaims the ſcripture-zealot, "are we then to mend the word of God by conjecture, and ſubſti-"tute our own ideas for the dictates of the Holy Ghoſt?" Have patience for a moment, and hear at leaſt what may be urged in favour of the conjectural critic. Let us firſt ſtate the queſtion as it ought to be. The conjectural critic does not aſſume the province

of *mending the word of God:* his aim is to purify it as much as poſſible from all human admixture: he wiſhes not to ſubſtitute his own ideas for the dictates of the Holy Ghoſt, but to reſtore thoſe dictates to their firſt integrity. His wiſh is certainly pious, and his aim commendable; it remains to be ſeen, how far he is likely to be ſucceſsful.

I ſay then that there are caſes in which the text of an author may be corrected and reſtored by mere critical conjecture; ſometimes with the utmoſt certainty, ſometimes with great appearance of it, and ſometimes only with probability. A few examples from the firſt Engliſh book that comes to hand will put this out of all doubt.

If you ſhould read in ſome faulty copy of Addiſon's firſt dialogue on medals, "Cynthio, Eugenius and Philander had *terited* together "from the town" (which might very eaſily happen from the ſtrong reſemblance in print of the letters *r* and *t*) would you wait for the authority of a manuſcript to reſtore theſe letters to their proper places and read *retired?* Again, if you read, "Their deſign was to "paſs away the heats ſummer," would you heſitate a moment to ſupply the words *of the*, or at leaſt the word *of*, between *heats* and *ſummer?* Once more, if the following words in the ſame dialogue were thus printed, "among the freſh breezes that from riſe the "river," would you deem it any temerity to put *riſe* before *from*, where it evidently ſhould be placed.

In the above examples, the emendations would be all of the utmoſt certainty. I will now produce ſome that would be the next thing to certain. Suppoſe we read, in the ſame place; "and the "agreeable *ture* of ſhades and fountains," we muſt perceive that ſomething is wanting before *ture*, and we ſhall have little doubt that it is *mix*. Again; "in which the whole country naturally"—*naturally*, what? why, moſt probably, "abounds:" though, abſolutely, it might perhaps be ſome other ſynonymous word.

But there are caſes where the emendation would be but barely probable, as in the following example: "They were all three well "verſed in the politer of learning, and had travelled into the moſt "nations of Europe." We know ſome word is wanting after *politer*, but we can only form a probable conjecture what word it is. It is probably *parts*, it may be *branches*; but ſome ſuch word it muſt be. It is ſtill harder to ſay what word ſhould precede *nations*, or whether there is not a word too much in this part of the ſentence: for we may fill it up by inſerting the word *refined* between *moſt* and *nations*; or by throwing out the word *the* before *moſt*: and both emendations would be almoſt equally probable.

It would be eaſy to bring ſimilar and ſtill more ſtriking inſtances from the Latin, Greek and other dead languages; but theſe, I preſume, are more than ſufficient to evince, that the text of an author may be corrected, ſometimes with certainty, and ſometimes with probability, from conjecture alone.

This, indeed, will be readily allowed with regard to other writ-

ings; but the BIBLE! the BIBLE! Is the original text of the Bible to be corrected in the ſame manner? With a proper deference and due diſtinction, I anſwer, undoubtedly it is. If in Ben-chaim's edition of the Hebrew text, for example, one of the commandments had been thus expreſſed; "Thou ſhalt commit adultery," as it is ſaid to have been once printed in an edition of the Engliſh Bible: muſt poſterior editors have waited for manuſcript authority to reſtore the negative particle? Or if, in the example adduced by Houbigant, it were written in our preſent text, through a miſtake not unfrequent with the Maſoretes, "Thou ſhalt adore thy God, and "*not* ſerve him." Muſt that wicked *not* remain there, becauſe we have no manuſcript at hand to correct it by? Surely, ſurely, he muſt be ſcrupulouſly fearful of profaning the Scripture, who would reject an emendation, that reſcues the Scripture itſelf from evident impiety; under pretext, that it is but a conjectural correction *.

* To make this matter ſtill more evident, and to expoſe the abſurdity of thoſe who maintain, that no conjectural emendations of the Hebrew text are admiſſible; let us put the caſe, that our Engliſh Bible were the original Scripture; and that in all the copies of it, whether printed or manuſcript, the ſixth verſe of the ſecond chapter of Ezekiel run thus (as it actually does in an edition I have ſeen:) "Though briars and thorns be with thee, and though "thou doſt *well* among ſcorpions; be not afraid, &c." Let us alſo ſuppoſe that this reading were prior to all tranſlations made from the ſuppoſed original, and could not, conſequently, be rectified by their means; would a critic of the ſmalleſt penetration, ſufficiently acquainted with the grammar and genius of the Engliſh language, and who had maturely conſidered the context and the ſcope of the prophet's words, be at a loſs to perceive, or unwarranted to affirm, that a *d* had been dropt out of the text, and that the original reading muſt have been *dwell?* Or, ſhould he find (as Archbiſhop Secker found in the edition he uſed) in Philip. i.

It is true, however, that all criticiſm, and particularly ſacred criticiſm, has its due bounds; and nothing is more eaſy or more common, than to exceed them. A young man of genius and application, who has got a certain tincture of Greek and Hebrew learning; and is able, with the help of a Lexicon, to read his Bible in the original, is but too apt to think he has made wonderful diſcoveries; and fancies he has hit on the genuine meaning of a thouſand obſcure paſſages, that had eſcaped every prior tranſlator. But if he poſſeſs but a ſmall ſhare of good ſenſe, and be not too eager to publiſh his crude eſſays, he will ſoon begin to percieve that he has been precipitate in his march, and will tread the ground over again with a more ſteady and cautious ſtep. He will not, now, cry out *Euréka* at the firſt appearance of a diſcovery, however ſpecious. He will carefully examine it in every point of view, ſuggeſt to himſelf every objection that is likely to be made againſt it, and adopt it only after mature diſcuſſion and full conviction. By proceeding in this manner, he will certainly make fewer diſcoveries; but thoſe he makes will be more to the purpoſe. In proportion as he advances in this difficult and dangerous career, he will move with ſtill greater warineſs; become every day more diffident

16. " to ad daffliction to my bonds;" or in Pſalm xxxi. 10. " my life is ſpent with grief and my *ears* with ſighing;" or 1 Timothy i. 2. Grace, mercy, peace from God our Father and Jeſus Chriſt *of* Lord;" would he be raſh in conjecturing that *of* ſhould be *our; ears, years;* and *ad daffliction, add affliction?* I hardly think that any one in his right ſenſes, would find fault with ſuch emendations; though made without the authority of either manuſcript or verſion.

of his critical acumen; doubt of many of his former aſſumptions; often find himſelf conſtrained to admit as highly plauſible, what he had once rejected as abſurd; and be contented with offering an opinion, where he had before uttered a deciſion. Such is the procedure of the ſage and ſober critic, whether he has to correct his text, or to explain it when corrected.

To give a minute detail of all the rules, and exceptions from the rules, that ought to guide him as he goes along, and which he never ought to loſe ſight of, would alone make a volume as large as Deſpauter. But they are all ultimately reducible to the four following general and comprehenſive canons, the uſe of which is not limited to conjectural criticiſm only; but extends to every other ſource of emendation.

The firſt canon is, never to ſuppoſe that the text is corrupted, without the moſt cogent and convincing reaſons. For if, as the judicious Rollin remarks, when altering the text of any author is in queſtion, one muſt be, as it were, compelled to it by a ſort of abſolute neceſſity, and have almoſt an evidence of the corruption; how much more ſtrictly is this rule to be obſerved, with regard to the text of Scripture?

The ſecond canon is, never to have recourſe to conjectural criticiſm, until every other ſource has been tried and exhauſted; for it would be ridiculous to exert even the greateſt ingenuity, in gueſſing, when we may attain our end, by readier and leſs deceptious means.

The third—Let all corrections be conſiſtent with the text and with one another; that is to ſay, let there be nothing in the correction that does not perfectly agree with what precedes and follows, and that is not ſupported by grammatical analogy.

The fourth—Inſert no correction, however plauſible or even certain, in the text, without warning the reader, and diſtinguiſhing it by a proper note.

Theſe canons ſtrictly adhered to, and diſcreetly uſed, we ſee no danger in correcting the Hebrew text. Nay, until it be thus corrected, we ſhall never have a good tranſlation of it.

But the corruptions of the preſent text are not the ſole difficulty the tranſlator has to ſurmount. To aſcertain the true meaning is often as hard as to aſcertain the true reading; and this has been another great cauſe of the imperfection of modern tranſlations: a cauſe which, perhaps, will never be wholly removed.

There is no language ſo compleatly copious and diſtinctive as to have a different *vocable* for every different idea. Our own, after all the refinement it has received, is wonderfully defective in this reſpect; and we yet want a great number of terms to expreſs the vaſt variety of our conceptions. Hence it requires no ſmall ſkill in the art of writing, to avoid, at all times, equivocation or amphibology.

But this is much more ſenſibly perceived in the Hebrew than, perhaps, any other language. The paucity of its compounds, the

uncertainty of its derivations, the frequent coincidences and confimilarities of its inflexions, an almoſt total want of abſtracts and modifiers, the many and multifarious ſignifications of the ſame particle—theſe and other ſimilar obſtacles impede the tranſlator's progreſs at every ſtep, and oblige him to grope his way with great caution and diffidence.

Beſides, even the radical ſignification of many words is extremely uncertain: nor needs this at all to ſurprize us. If there are terms and phraſes in Shakeſpeare, who wrote in our own language and touched almoſt on our own days, already become unintelligible to our beſt gloſſariſts; how difficult muſt it be to decypher the words of a language, that has ceaſed to be a living one for two thouſand years; is all contained in one not bulky volume; and of which ſeveral words and modes of expreſſion occur but ſeldom, or only once?

Add to theſe the difficulties that ariſe from the great diverſity of ſtile in the different Hebrew writers, from references to monuments that no more exiſt; from frequent alluſions to facts that are not recorded or but barely hinted; from proverbial ſayings, poetical licences, uncommonly bold metaphors, and obſcure allegories: not to mention the very great difference of laws, manners and local uſages; which are well known to have great influence on the language of a nation, and muſt have particularly affected that of the Jews, who, in thoſe reſpects, ſo widely differed from all other nations. Whoever conſiders all this duly, will be convinced, even without

the light of experience, that the route of the Bible-tranſlator is neither ſmooth nor even; and that it behoves him to walk in it with the utmoſt warineſs.

It may, nevertheleſs, be confidently affirmed, that the greateſt part of thoſe who have entered into it for theſe laſt three hundred years, have voluntarily put out their own eyes, and allowed themſelves to be led on by the worſt of guides. The ſame impoſing ſet of men, who had the audacity and art to make the Chriſtian world believe that they had preſerved the text of their Scriptures in its original integrity, by a pretended enumeration of every word and letter, found it equally eaſy to perſwade them, that the true reading and meaning had alſo been preſerved by the punctuation of every ſyllable, and the diſtinction of every pauſe. This was a ſecond part of that wonderful MASORA, without which the Hebrew text was ſuppoſed to be a mere dead letter, a noſe of wax, a body without a ſoul *.

I will not here engage in the much agitated controverſy about the antiquity and authority of the vowel points. Capellus, Maſclef, Houbigant and Sharp have nearly exhauſted the ſubject; and the efforts, that have been made to refute their arguments, have only ſhewn more clearly how invincible they are. The vowel points, whether they be the fruit of the fifth or of the tenth century, are certainly a rabbinical, and, in many reſpects, but a pue-

* *Naſum cereum, corpus expers animae.* Guarin. praefat. in Gram. Heb.

rile production *. Conſidered, indeed, as a mere human work they may be allowed to have ſome little utility. They ſhew us how the Hebrew was pronounced at the time of their invention.

* To give the reader, who is not acquainted with Hebrew grammar, ſome, not unfavourable, idea of Maſoretic punctuation, let us ſuppoſe that the preſent Engliſh verſion of the Bible were the original; and written, as the original formerly was, in one uniform character, and without any of our modern marks of diſtinction. In this ſuppoſition, the text would run thus:

INTHEBEGINNINGGODCREAT

EDTHEHEAUENANDTHEEARTH

Let us next ſuppoſe that ſome ingenious pedagogue, remarking the great difference between this orthography and the preſent orthöepy; and obſerving, alſo, that ſo cloſe and connected an arrangement of words and letters is attended with ſome difficulty to unpractiſed readers; ſhould ſet himſelf to contrive expedients, to remove thoſe inconveniences; and, for that purpoſe, ſhould reaſon in the following manner: "Our alphabet has but five vowels to "expreſs fifteen vocal ſounds;—Some of our conſonants vary their powers according to their "ſituation; and ſome of them have occaſionally no power at all. The ſame letter is ſome-"times an aſpirate and ſometimes not. Many words have more than one ſignification with "out any difference in the mode of utterance. Our written language has no pauſal marks, "and our proſody is not regulated by any tonic diſtinctions. To remedy theſe evils, and to "fix the true Engliſh pronunciation for all time to come, let our fifteen vowel ſounds be re-"preſented by as many different ſymbols.

"A open by		E ſhort by		O long by	
"A cloſe by		E obſcure by		O ſhort by	
"A broad by		I long by		U long by	*
"A ſlender by		I ſhort by		U ſhort by	
"E long by		I French by		U Engliſh	

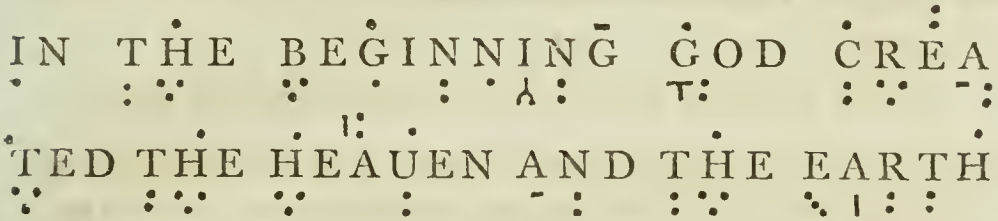
"Then, let the hard ſounds of C and G, I and V conſonants, and all quieſcents be marked "with a dot above, and the aſpirate H and hiſſing S with a ſmall horizontal line.—Let all "words be ſeparated by proper ſpaces, and diſtinguiſhed by proportionate pauſes. Let

* *The ſymbols of I ſhort, O long, and U long, are the ſame; but the firſt is placed below the line, the ſecond above, and the laſt in the middle.*

They diſtinguiſh, although not always juſtly, the different acceptations of the ſame or nearly ſimilar words. In our preſent faulty text, they often ſupply the want of many formative letters; and,

" A full pauſe be marked thus
" A ſmaller pauſe thus } both below the line.
" A ſtill ſmaller pauſe thus
" And the ſmalleſt of all thus } both above the line."

He ſaid, and ſtraightway fell to work: and lo! the whole Bible, in his induſtrious hands, aſſumed in due time this rare appearance.



It is of no importance, whether theſe ſymbols, which are indeed the very rabbinical points, are as accurately combined, and adapted to our language, as they might be: they are ſufficiently ſo to expreſs the idea that is meant to be conveyed; and now, my good reader, what think you of this improvement? " The diſtinction of words, you will ſay, is well enough: the " marks of pauſation, though multiplied without neceſſity, may alſo have their uſe: but to " attempt to fix a pronunciation that is ever fluctuating, and tones that are continually " changing, by any other rules than the preſent uſage, and the practice of the beſt ſpeakers, " is a fooliſh and fruitleſs attempt. For how are the powers of theſe very ſymbols aſcertained, but by an immediate appeal to living ſounds and the now prevailing modes of utterance? " If theſe happen to change, as we know they imperceptibly do, what will be the uſe of your " boaſted ſymbols at any future period? and by what canons will their reſpective powers be " aſcertained? Granting even, that they had, like Ezekiel's myſtic wheels, a living and ſelf-in- " terpretating ſpirit within them, that could effectually and for ever arreſt ſo fleeting a thing " as vocal air; why is their poſition in the text ſo awkward and unnatural? Why are they ge- " nerally placed, not beneath the vowels, the various powers of which they are ſuppoſed " to denote, but beneath the preceding or following conſonant?" Stop, my honeſt friend; you are now quite miſtaken: there are, no more, any vowels in the Engliſh alphabet. " What? *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, *u*, not vowels?" By no means: they are all conſonants; mute conſonants!— Have you any thing more to object?—" I have: Such a motley multitude of pricks and points

thereby, ſerve to more readily diſcriminate genders, numbers, perſons, moods and tenſes; although here, too, the diſcrimination is often arbitrary and ſometimes manifeſtly wrong. In ſhort, they are a kind of grammatical comment on the text; and, if they had never been puſhed forward in any other light, they might have been permitted to hold a ſubordinate rank among works of the ſame nature: but to impoſe them upon us as of divine authority, was the height of impudence, and to receive them as ſuch the height of credulity.

As ſuch, however, they were generally received by almoſt all

" diſfigure the beauty and ſymmetry of the text, and often confuſe the mind, as much as they " bewilder the eye; and I diſlike every thing that produceth confuſion." Good! But what if our pedagogue had crowded the ſcene with a whole hoſt more of *regal* and *miniſterial* attendants (for ſo the Hebrew grammarians denominate their accents) with *ſakeph-katons* and *ſakeph-gadols; paſhtas* and *karneparas; ſhalſhaleths* and *mercakephalas*, and twenty other ſuch barbarous names; of which, although it requires a little code of laws to marſhal them, and although Bohlius is ſaid to have in vain employed ſeven long years for that laudable purpoſe, yet neither he nor any one elſe could ever point out the uſes? What, if inſtead of the true Engliſh pronunciation, he had given you a Scotch or Iriſh one? What if even his diviſion of words and ſentences were often not only trifling but palpably erroneous? What if other pedagogues, improving on his improvements, had thrown out, by degrees, the original vowels, now become uſeleſs lumber; and if inſtead of GOD, HEAVEN, EARTH, you were preſented with GD, HVN, ERTH, beſpattered with pricks and patches as above? What if ſuch eliſions were called natural anomalies of Engliſh grammar? What—" Sweep all that traſh away," you would undoubtedly exclaim, " and give me again the plain old unpointed text of my Bible."

Such traſh is the greateſt part of the Maſoretic points, which rabbinical pedagogues would impoſe upon us as the only ſure interpreter of the Hebrew ſcripture! Whoever wiſhes to ſee, to what degree of abſurdity, or inſanity, even Chriſtian writers have been led by this impoſition, may read Waſmuth's *Inſtitutions;* Ouſel *de accentuatione Hebraica;* or Walter Croſs's *Taghmical art*, publiſhed at London in the year 1698.

Proteſtant communions *, from this ridiculous notion, that if they were once allowed to be a human invention, the infallibility of the Scripture, as a rule of faith, would be precarious; and the fundamental article of Proteſtantiſm be overturned at one blow. This blow, nevertheleſs, a Proteſtant divine † was not afraid to ſtrike; and he ſtruck it ſo effectually, that all the rabbinical learning and dialectical ſkill of the Buxtorfs were not able to ward it.

But what could not be done by ſkill or learning, was done by dint of authority. In the year 1679 a ſpecial canon was framed at Geneva and adopted by all the Helvetian churches; by which it was decreed that no one ſhould in future be admitted to the ſacred miniſtry, who did not publicly acknowledge the Maſoretic text to be divine and authentic; both as to *conſonants*‡ and *vowels*. They had only one ſtep further to go; and that was, to decree the myſteries of the *Cabbala* to be of divine origin.

Although the Geneva canon, backed by reams of annual theſes from the Dutch univerſities, ſuſpended for a while the fate of the

* This is the more remarkable, as the firſt Reformers and their diſciples, for nearly a century, were of a very different opinion (ſee Hody *de text. original.* p. 553.) But there is a cauſe for every thing. The diſpute about the *Judge* of controverſies had been warmly agitated between them and the Catholic party; and they thought they could not better anſwer ſome troubleſome objections of the latter, than by maintaining that the vowel points were of divine origin. What is ſtill more ſtrange, there were ſome few Catholics of the ſame opinion. Even Arias Montanus leans that way; and Poſtellus went further than ever did Jew or Proteſtant: he affirmed that God himſelf had made a preſent of the *Maſora* to Adam.

† Louis Cappel a French Calviniſt and profeſſor of the Hebrew at Saumur.

‡ In the language of that time, all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet were called conſonants.

Maſoretic Dagon, it could not long prevent its downfal. The moſt learned of all countries were generally on the ſide of Capellus; and their auxiliary attacks were the more ſucceſsful, as ſome of them were deſerters from the other party and knew its weakeſt holds. Still ſome feeble efforts were made, from time to time, to ſupport the tottering idol: but he now ſeems to lie proſtrate on the threſhold of his own temple, never, we apprehend, to be raiſed again*.

But if we reject the Maſoretic points and accents, what ſhall we ſubſtitute in their place? Muſt we diveſt the text of every thing but the bare elements, and divide and explain it as we pleaſe? Not as we pleaſe but as we ought, and in the ſame manner we ſhould divide and explain any other author. The firſt part of this taſk will indeed be eaſy, if we have accompliſhed the latter. The true meaning once aſcertained, the neceſſary diviſions will readily preſent themſelves: nor is it material whether they be always the moſt proper that might be found, or not. It is ſufficient that they cre-

* The laſt publication in this country in favour of the Maſoretic ſyſtem is, I believe, the ſecond edition of a Hebrew grammar, in Latin, by Dr. James Robertſon, profeſſor of the oriental languages in the Univerſity of Edinburgh; printed there in 1783. In the preface, notes and appendix to this work, the learned profeſſor has collected from the Buxtorfs, Leuſden, Schultens, Guarin, the French encyclopediſts, Memoires de literature, &c. the moſt plauſible arguments that have been urged by the punctuiſts ſince the beginning of the controverſy. The appendix and part of the notes are chiefly intended to combat the oppoſite ſyſtem as adopted and defended by profeſſor Wilſon of the Univerſity of St. Andrews; who had, the year before, publiſhed, for the uſe of his own claſs, *Elements of Hebrew Grammar;* which, conſidered as an elementary book, wants nothing to recommend it to the public but a better Hebrew type. His antagoniſt has been far more fortunate in his printer.

ate no embarraſſment or confuſion, by disjoining what ought to be connected; or by connecting what ought to be disjoined, as the Maſoretic diviſions not ſeldom do *.

The great object, then, is to come at the true ſignification of every word and ſentence; and this, I affirm from experience, we ſhall better accompliſh with an unpointed text before us, than with a pointed one: eſpecially if, in the latter caſe, we ſit down to tranſlate, prepoſſeſſed with an idea, that the points are to be our only guides.

I ſay, "only guides:" for I would not exclude them from the tranſlator's notice. They may occaſionally be conſulted, not as

* This, indeed, ought to be reckoned among the cauſes of the imperfection of modern verſions. For there is hardly a modern tranſlator, who has not, more or leſs, been led aſtray by the preſent diviſion and punctuation of the Hebrew text; even when the text itſelf is ſufficiently clear and obvious, to make any deviation from it unexcuſable. The diviſion of the chapters is often improper, but that of the verſes is infinitely more ſo. We are in many places preſented with a full periodical diſtinction, where there ſhould not be ſo much as the ſmalleſt pauſe; nominatives are ſeparated from their verbs, adjectives from their ſubſtantives, and even letters and ſyllables are cruelly divorced from the words they naturally belong to. "Nothing," ſays a ſenſible writer in the Critical Review (vol. xviii. p. 188.) "has been more injurious to the ſa-
"cred writings, than the common method of dividing them into chapters and verſes; by which
"means the chain of reaſoning is frequently broken, the ſentences mangled, the eye miſguid-
"ed, the attention bewildered, and the meaning loſt." This is, indeed, high colouring; but ſtill the likeneſs is true: and there are many inſtances, both in the Old and New Teſtament, of miſtakes and miſtranſlations from this cauſe. Abſurd as the preſent diviſions often are, there is yet an almoſt abſolute neceſſity of retaining them, in ſome ſhape or other. According to them our Concordances and Indexes have been formed; and references and quotations made for two hundred years back; it would therefore create much confuſion to remove ſuch land-marks. But we may remove the evils which they have cauſed.

oracles, but as opinions; which we may adopt, or reject, as we judge it expedient: but, I believe, we ſhall rarely, by their aſſiſtance, overcome a real difficulty, which we could not have overcome without it. Even their greateſt pretended utility, that of ſupplying a number of ſervile letters which are wanting in our printed Hebrew Bibles, is in a great meaſure ſuperſeded by the collation of manuſcripts; in which we luckily find thoſe very letters, which the punctuiſts would have us ridiculouſly believe, were originally wanting in the autographs; although the want of them leaves ſuch grammatical irregularities in the text, as no written language ever acknowledged.

And here I cannot help remarking, that the Maſoretic punctuation has been productive of the greateſt evil, where it has been credulouſly ſuppoſed to be the moſt productive of good. The real vocal letters, being once ſtript of their vocal powers and deemed quieſcent conſonants, were gradually thrown out as uſeleſs, or omitted as unneceſſary; according to the negligence or caprice of tranſcribers: for what need is there (they probably ſaid) ſcrupulouſly to retain a *vau*, when a *holem* or *kibbutz* performs its functions; or a *jod* when its place is ſo well ſupplied by a *hirik-katon*, *tzere* or *ſegol*?* Hence we do not meet with any two manuſcripts,

* The *jod* and *vau* are important Hebrew formatives. The firſt is the characteriſtic of the maſculine plural of nouns and of the tranſitive voice of verbs, not to mention other purpoſes which it formerly ſeems to have ſerved; the *vau* is the characteriſtic of feminine plurals and

that are alike in theſe particulars; and by far the greateſt number of various readings ariſe from the accidental or intentional omiſſion of thoſe two letters.

But if the *Maſora* is conſidered as an unſure and inſufficient guide, to lead us to the true meaning of the Hebrew ſcriptures, what other methods ſhall we take to attain our end? The very ſame we take to underſtand the Greek and Latin authors. We muſt, firſt of all, learn the grammar and vocabulary of the language; we muſt ſtudy its peculiar ſtructure and genius; obſerve its ſingularities, anomalies, and analogy with other tongues; conſult the beſt lexicons, concordances * and grammatical commentaries; conſider attentively the ſcope, ſtile and phraſeology of every

of two of the participles: but in all theſe reſpects they are both wanting, in an infinite number of places, in the preſent printed text; and this want is urged by punctuiſts as a proof of the utility, not to ſay neceſſity, of the vowel-points. Ye are in the right, Gentlemen! When ye have undermined a building by taking away ſome of its chief ſupports, ye muſt ſtay it with ſuch materials as ye have; and ye may then inſiſt on their being neceſſary: but if we can by any means replace the original ſtone pillars, we ſhall have no further uſe for your wooden props.

* Of all the helps towards underſtanding the Hebrew ſcriptures a good concordance is undoubtedly the moſt uſeful. But we yet want a good concordance; and the man who ſhould devote five or ſix years to the compiling of one from Buxtorf, Calaſio, Noldius, Taylor, Kircher, Montfaucon and Trommius, would do a ſingular ſervice to Biblical ſtudents. Buxtorf's method of arrangement, with very little improvement, ſhould be ſtrictly followed; the errors of orthography rectified from the authority of manuſcripts and other ſources of emendation; and the various acceptations of the ſame word in the ancient verſions exactly noted and methodically diſtinguiſhed. Such a work would be worth all the commentaries that ever have been made.

different writer; carefully diſtinguiſh the natural from the figurative, poetical from proſaic compoſition; compare author with author, paſſage with paſſage, image with image, trope with trope; ſo as that all the parts of the whole text may mutually throw light on one another:—and, becauſe the whole text together makes but an ordinary volume, and contains many words and phraſes, that occur but once or extremely ſeldom, we muſt, for the better underſtanding of theſe, call into our aid the other Oriental kindred dialects; the Chaldee, Syriac, Samaritan, Ethiopic and Arabic. The three firſt have ſo great an affinity of idiom with the Hebrew, that they may be conſidered as couſin-germans of the ſame family; and though the other two are not quite ſo near a-kin, their relationſhip is not leſs evident *. From all of them, therefore, may be derived helps towards inveſtigating the radical ſignification of obſcure words, and illuſtrating modes of expreſſion that would, elſe, be inexplicable. A comparative dictionary of all thoſe dialects would be a moſt uſeful work. With half the bulk of Caſtel's, it might be made much more copious and correct; and, to render the analogy more ſtriking, it ſhould, I think, be all in the Hebrew character, like Schindler's pentaglott lexicon. Such a

* The Arabic has one advantage which the other dialects do not, in the ſame degree, poſſeſs. It is ſtill a living language, the moſt extenſively ſpoken, and, in ſome reſpects, the moſt copious of all languages. There are extant in it a great many elegant compoſitions on all ſorts of ſubjects, both in proſe and poetry; and the ſtudy of it has, of late years, been greatly promoted by ſome of the moſt learned men of the age.

work I have long had in contemplation*: but alas! *Iter longum, brevis aetas:* We may graſp at immenſity in idea; but our ſpan is, in reality, the ſpan of a pigmy.

Until ſome literary drudge be found, with patience and ſufficient leiſure to go through ſo tedious a labour, we muſt be content with picking from Buxtorf, Schaaf, Crineſius, Ludolf, Mininſki, Golius and Richardſon, ſuch information as we can get; though we ſhall be frequently diſappointed, and obliged to confeſs, that the ſuccours, we draw from ſuch ſources, are but ſmall, in proportion to the pains they coſt us. Etymological conjectures are of all the moſt fallacious; and it requires much penetration, a nice diſcerning taſte, and a long and ſerious ponderation of circumſtances, to be able, amidſt a number of almoſt equally probable derivations, to determine which is likelieſt to be the true one. When we have toiled, for example, through Schultens's tedious and diſguſting book of *Hebrew origins*, we have only learned, how little we can learn from ſuch ſort of diſcuſſions; and are vexed that we ſpent ſo much time to ſo little purpoſe.

Our next great reſources, therefore, after a long analytical and comparative ſtudy of the Hebrew language itſelf, are the ancient verſions; which not only afford the beſt helps for correcting the

* As a proper introduction to ſuch a work, I formed, many years ago, the plan of a *Comparative Grammar of the principal Oriental dialects;* which, by way of relaxation from more ſerious ſtudies, I am now compleating, and preparing for the preſs—not doubting but the ſmalleſt attempt to facilitate the ſtudy of thoſe languages, and thereby to promote Biblical knowledge, will be favourably received by the ſerious part of the public.

text; but are alſo, in general, the beſt interpreters of its genuine meaning. I will not ſay, with Voſſius, that, if we had not thoſe verſions, particularly that of the Septuagint, we ſhould be able to make no tranſlation at all; but I think it may be confidently affirmed that a tranſlation, made without their aid, would, in many places, be extremely imperfect and uncertain; and that it has happened, by a moſt ſingular providence, that they have been tranſmitted to us in ſo many different forms; as if for that very purpoſe. Yet we are not implicitly to follow them, any more than the *Maſora*. We are ever to remember that they likewiſe have their faults and corruptions; and that nearly the ſame precautions are neceſſary, when we conſult them as interpreters; as when we employ them as *correctoria*. What has been already ſaid of them, in the one reſpect, is applicable in the other.

Neither are we to neglect the modern verſions, whether Latin or vernacular, that have been made ſince the revival of letters. For although they are almoſt all made from the preſent Maſoretic text, and conſequently participate of all its defects; there are few of them from which a diligent and judicious tranſlator may not draw ſome advantage: let us here take a ſhort review of them; beginning by thoſe in Latin.

The moſt ancient *, and, in a great meaſure, the model of all

* I omit mentioning, ſuch modern Latin tranſlations as are only in manuſcript, ſeveral of which are ſaid to be extant in different libraries; as alſo ſuch party-coloured verſions as thoſe of Oſiander, Clarius, &c, which are only interpolated editions of the Latin Vulgate.

the reſt, was that of Santes Pagninus, printed firſt at Florence in the year 1528. It was the work of twenty five years, and has been greatly extolled both by Jews and Chriſtians, as the beſt Latin verſion that ever was made from the Hebrew; that of Jerom not excepted. It is, for all that, a barbarous compoſition, deſpicable in almoſt every point of view, but that of a grammatical gloſſary: as ſuch it may be of conſiderable uſe in giving an idea of the Hebrew idiom, and a ſuperficial knowledge of the language to grown up Biblical ſtudents, who are too idle to turn over the leaves of a lexicon, or con their Buxtorf. It was made yet more horridly uncouth by Arias Montanus, who interlined it in his edition of the Hebrew text of the Antwerp polyglott, from which it unaccountably found its way into that of London.

Next, in priority of time, is the verſion of Munſter, which appeared about the year 1534. It is little leſs literal, but more perſpicuous and elegant than that of Pagninus. The rabbins were his chief guides; and his annotations are compiled with no ſmall diſcernment from their beſt works.

Of a ſtill purer Latinity and greater perſpicuity is the tranſlation of Leo-Juda, commonly called the Tigurine Bible; becauſe it was publiſhed by the divines of Zurich. The firſt edition is of 1543. It has been ſince frequently republiſhed in different kingdoms; and with ſome ſmall alterations, even by the Catholic Univerſity of Salamanca, in 1584.

Hitherto the new tranſlators of the Bible had moved nearly in the ſame track; all purſuing, with more or leſs attention and fidelity, the route which the rabbins had marked out for them; and making the Maſora the pole-ſtar by which they ſteered. Caſtalio had the courage to ſtrike out a path for himſelf. He tranſlated, indeed, from the preſent Hebrew text, but he did not Judaically deſpiſe the ancient verſions. The principal, and often neceſſary, ſupplements which are found in them, but wanting in the Maſoretic copies, he inſerted with proper diſtinctions *: nor did he reject thoſe uſeful and excellent books, which moſt Proteſtants have, after St. Jerom and his Hebrew preceptors, too raſhly thrown out of the canon and branded with the name of *Apocrypha*; but which, in the moſt ancient copies of the Greek, Syriac and Latin verſions, are intermixed and rank with the other books: and, to connect the Old Teſtament with the New, he inſerted two excellent ſupplements, abridged from Joſephus; the one after the fourth book of Eſdras, and the other at the end of the Machabees.

Caſtalio deviated no leſs from his predeceſſors in his mode of tranſlating. They had crept, like timid and ignoble ſlaves, after an imperious maſter; he claimed the privilege of walking ſide by ſide. His verſion is bold and free, his ſtile clear and conciſe, his diction pure and perhaps ſcrupulouſly elegant. It was reprobated,

* To additions from the Greek he prefixed a G; to thoſe from the Latin an L; when from both, G. L. An H denoted the end of the addition.

however, in general by Jews and Chriſtians, by Catholics and Proteſtants, as a temerarious, inſolent and even impious burleſque of Holy writ. The theologians of Geneva, with Beza at their head, were particularly harſh in their cenſures of it. But more cool and candid eſtimators have given a very different judgment. Simler, Huetius, Buxtorf, Duport, and, above all, Epiſcopius have borne honourable teſtimony in its favour; and whoever reads it without prepoſſeſſion, and compares it carefully with the originals, will, we doubt not, be of the opinion of Dr. Mead, that it is not only a moſt elegant but alſo a moſt faithful verſion *. Had the author worked upon a better text, retained a little more of the idiomatical ſimplicity of his originals, and been ſomewhat leſs laviſh of his oratorial graces and claſſical refinements, his tranſlation would, altogether, be the firſt of modern times. As it is, I make no heſitation to give it as my opinion, that a more compleat, more impartial or more faithful verſion will not eaſily be found. The beſt edition is that of Baſil, in folio, in 1573.

About two years after, was publiſhed a new Latin verſion of the Old Teſtament, by Junius and Tremellius; to which, in the ſecond and all poſterior editions, was added Beza's tranſlation of the New Teſtament. It has been often retouched and reprinted, both in

* Quam, habita multis in locis collatione, non modo Latiniſſimam, ſed etiam accuratiſſimam et ad ſenſum mentemque dictorum, tam in Hebraeis quam in Graecis, maximè accomodatam deprehendi. Praefat. in Medicam. Sacr.

Germany and in England; and was long in high eſtimation among Maſoretic Proteſtants: yet it never entirely recovered from the diſcredit thrown upon it by Druſius, and is now almoſt ſunk into oblivion. It muſt be confeſſed, however, that it merited a better fate: and although it deſerves not the exceſſive eulogiums of Poole, it is neither ſo unfaithful nor ſo arbitrary as ſome critics pretend. The reproach of its being a paraphraſe rather than a tranſlation, is the worſt founded of all reproaches. It often runs into the other extreme, and is, in ſome reſpects, more ſervile than that of Pagninus. To me its chief defects appear to be an impure and barbarous Latinity, an affected mode of conſtruction, and a ſtrange disfigurement of the Hebrew names, to make them agreeable to the Maſoretic punctuation.

The famous Cardinal de Vio Cajetan, who, amidſt a multiplicity of ſtate affairs, found means to devote a part of every day to ſerious ſtudy, left behind him, among other laborious productions, a tranſlation of a great part of the Bible. As he was totally ignorant of the Hebrew, he employed two learned Rabbins, a Jew and a Chriſtian, as his interpreters; and having a ſound judgement and diſcerning taſte, he ſucceeded much better than could be expected. But his verſion was formed on this erroneous principle, that a tranſlation of the Scripture cannot be too literal; ſhould it even, for that reaſon, be unintelligible. This prepoſſeſſion made him judge unfavorably of the Vulgate; which he often cenſures without

reaſon: for which cauſe ſome zealots have unjuſtly taxed him with hereſy. His tranſlation has much the ſame faults with that of Pagninus; and may be of much the ſame uſe to the Hebrew ſtudent. It was printed, with his commentary, at Lyons in the year 1639.

At the ſame place, in 1650, was publiſhed another Latin verſion of the Bible, as far as Ezekiel, with a tedious commentary, by Malvenda, a Spaniſh Dominican. He did well to add a commentary; for, without it, his tranſlation would be often perfectly unintelligible: ſo barbarous is his ſtile, and ſo unhappy his choice of expreſſions. "If any one, ſays F. Simon, wiſhes to have a tranſla-"tion of the Scriptures purely grammatical, let him uſe that of "Malvenda." I ſhould rather ſay, is any one madly fond of a verſion ſervilely literal? Let him read Malvenda's; and I ſhall wonder much, if he be not ſoon cured of his phrenzy.

A new Latin verſion of the whole Bible, by Sebaſtian Schmidt, was publiſhed at Straſburg in the year 1696. It is ſaid to have been on the anvil near forty years, and is evidently, laboured with great care and pains. It is clear, conciſe and not inelegant; and if the author had been poſſeſt of a better text, and had paid ſome more attention to the ancient verſions, his work would have been a valuable acceſſion to the Biblical library. A more correct edition of it was given by the divines of Straſburg, in the year 1708: and it has been ſince republiſhed, in Germany, along with the Hebrew text.

John Le Clerc, profeſſor of philoſophy, belles lettres and Hebrew in the college of the Remonſtrants at Amſterdam, and one of the moſt univerſal ſcholars of his time, publiſhed a new Latin verſion of the Pentateuch in 1710. The reſt of his tranſlation, which comprehends the greateſt part of the Holy Scriptures, appeared at different periods and places; and a compleat edition of the whole was printed at Amſterdam in 1731. Though this verſion has little in it to claim a diſtinguiſhed ſuperiority over thoſe that preceded, it does not deſerve the contempt, with which it is treated by Houbigant, who ſeems to have inherited all Simon's prepoſſeſſions againſt the author, and omits no opportunity of depretiating his labours. Had Le Clerc lived in our days, and been convinced of the neceſſity of correcting the text, before he attempted to tranſlate it, he was certainly capable of producing a much better work; eſpecially if he had learnt to write with a little more difficulty, and kept the *operoſa carmina fingo* of Horace always in mind. But he wrote in too great a hurry, and on too many ſubjects, to write excellently on any ſubject; and, although extremely confident of his own abilities and bold in his aſſertions, yet was unaccountably, more or leſs, a ſlave to rabbinical prejudices.

To ſhake of theſe entirely, and to open a new and rational career to the Biblical critic, was reſerved for Houbigant. That truly learned man, who died only in 1783, in the ninety eighth year of his age, had early applied to the ſtudy of the Oriental lan-

guages, in a ſociety where they have long been cultivated with great ſucceſs. Having learned the Hebrew according to Maſclef's new method, and compiled an excellent little dictionary, on the ſame principles, under the title of *Racines Hebraiques ſans points-voyelles*, he formed the plan of a new verſion of the Old Teſtament; not from the preſent printed Maſoretic copies, which Capellus and others had ſo invincibly proved to be erroneous; but from a copy corrected by ſuch means, and from ſuch ſources of emendation, as he conceived the moſt likely to anſwer the purpoſe; and which are, in general, the ſame that have been ſpecified in the former part of this Proſpectus. With what ingenuity and judgment he has executed the great deſign, is well known to thoſe who have peruſed his work. Nothing can exceed the purity, ſimplicity, perſpicuity and energy of his tranſlation; and if he has not always been equally happy in his conjectural emendation of the text, it cannot be denied that he has, at leaſt, carried away the palm from all thoſe who preceded him in the ſame career. The clamors that have been raiſed againſt him are the clamors of illiberal ignorance, or of partiality to a ſyſtem which he had turned into ridicule. While his mode of interpreting is approved and imitated by a Lowth, a Kennicott, a Michaelis and a Starck, the barkings of inferior critics will not much injure him. Houbigant's verſion, accompanied with the Hebrew text of Vanderhooght, *prolegomena* and critical notes, was publiſhed in the moſt ſplendid manner at Paris, between

the years 1747 and 1753, in four folio volumes; and is already become a rare and coſtly book *.

Beſides thoſe general Latin verſions, we have a great many others of ſome particular books or parts of books, by Zuinglius, Oecolampadius, Melanchton, Druſius, Piſcator, Muſculus, Maſius, Terſer, Brentius, Bolducius, Juſtiniani, Felix Pratenſis, Pellicanus, Genebrard, De-Muis, Ferrandus, Cocceius, Leuſden, &c. of all which the induſtrious tranſlator will avail himſelf, as far as he has it in his power; and from all which he may actually gather ſome grains of ſterling ore.

What has been ſaid of modern Latin, is equally applicable to modern vernacular tranſlations. They are all caſt, as it were, in the ſame mould; all ſcrupulouſly literal verſions of the ſame faulty originals, and, almoſt always, under the guidance of Pagninus. The moſt diſtinguiſhing characters of thoſe we are acquainted with ſhall be given in very few words.

The firſt vernacular verſion made in Europe from the originals, is the German of Luther. It was publiſhed, in parts, between the years 1522 and 1533; and, for the firſt time, all together in 1535. Since that time it has been often reprinted, with various corrections and interpolations, to adapt it to the different communions in Germany; and even tranſlated, as an architype, into other Teutonic

* The verſion was publiſhed ſeparately in ſeven volumes large octavo; and there is a third edition of the Pſalms in twelves, along with the Vulgate, of the year 1755.

dialects. It is certainly a wonderful production. If it be conſidered in what turbulent times, and amidſt what variety of other avocations it was made, we are at a loſs to comprehend how one man, who had no model to follow, (for Ulenberg's barbarous verſion from the Vulgate cannot be ſo called) could, in ſo ſhort a ſpace and with ſuch ſcanty helps, accompliſh ſo great a work. The Catholics and Calviniſts have often decried it without reaſon; and more, perhaps, out of odium to its author than from a regard for truth. There are, indeed, ſome paſſages in the firſt editions, which he ſeems to have wreſted a little, to make them ſpeak more explicitly his favorite tenet of juſtification by faith alone. But theſe were few in number, and were rectified in poſterior editions. That of the year 1542 was carefully reviſed by himſelf, with the aſſiſtance of ſome of the moſt learned men of that age; * and again juſt before his death in 1545.

Although the language of Luther's verſion had already in 1684 become ſo obſolete, that a gloſſary was found neceſſary for underſtanding it; and although it may be eaſily ſuppoſed, that a century more, in the preſent progreſs of the German tongue, has given it a ſtill more antique mien; yet it retains, in a great meaſure, its firſt celebrity; and has not only triumphed over all former at-

* Melanchton, Juſtus Jonas, Cruciger, Bugenhaſius, Zeigler, Forſtenius, Rorarius. By theſe it was collated not only with the Hebrew text, but alſo with the Chaldee paraphraſes and the Greek and Latin verſions: for we have already obſerved that the abſurd idea of Maſoretic infallibility had not yet been adopted by the reformers.

tempts to ſuperſede it, but is, at this day, preferred by many Germans to their latteſt verſions.

This, however, cannot, I think, be long the caſe: for if any man be equal to a good tranſlation of the Bible, it is ſurely Michaelis. His erudition, taſte and judgment are well known in the literary world by his numerous and various productions; and his verſion of the Old Teſtament, which is now happily concluded, muſt appear to thoſe, who can reliſh all its beauties, one of the beſt that ever was made. He has, I know, been blamed for deviating too widely from the letter of his text. But his apology is obvious: he tranſlated to be underſtood; and if he cannot be convicted of having miſtaken or miſrepreſented the meaning of his author, he cannot ſurely be, with juſtice, cenſured for conſulting the pleaſure and profit of his reader. But it is impoſſible to pleaſe ſome critics, becauſe they will not be pleaſed. Michaelis is not a blind admirer of the Maſora, and cannot be brooked by thoſe who are.

The Belgic and other northern churches had, for ſome time, no other verſion of the Scripture, but that of Luther; tranſlated into their reſpective tongues, and altered, from time to time, by every new editor. But the States General of Holland, in conſequence of a decree of the Synod of Dort, ordered a new Dutch tranſlation to be made from the originals; which was publiſhed in the year 1636. A particular account of it may be read in Leuſden *, who gives it much more than due praiſe.

* Philol. Hebr. mixt. diſſert. xi.

In like manner, a new Daniſh verſion, by Reſenius Biſhop of Seelandt, was publiſhed by the authority of Chriſtian IV. in 1607. But the Swedes, I believe, have yet no other tranſlation than that from Luther's, again and again corrected by different hands *.

The French tranſlation, publiſhed at Neufchâtel in the year 1535, was the haſty production of Olivetan, aſſiſted by Calvin; but it was, afterwards, ſo often reviſed and patched by different perſons, that it ſcarcely retains any part of its firſt texture. After all, it is but an indifferent verſion, and very far from that perfection which might have been expected from the labours of ſuch learned men as Bertram, Beza, Jaquemot, Goulart, Marez, Martin, &c. Some particular paſſages, however, I have found better rendered in it, than in any other Maſoretic verſion.

Another French tranſlation, by Diodati, was publiſhed at Geneva in 1644, and was well received by the Calviniſts. It is not ſo literal as that of Olivetan, but much more elegant and perſpicuous; which is the more to be wondered at, as the author was an Italian, and the ſame perſon who had, ſome years before, given a moſt elegant Italian tranſlation; of which, in the ſequel.

In fine, Le Cene's verſion, after a new plan of his own, appeared in 1707, but did not meet with the reception he expected. His *Projét*, which was tranſlated into Engliſh by Hugh Roſs, and

* I am informed by Mr. Woide that a new Swediſh verſion of the Bible has been lately made; and that it is a very good one.

baſely publiſhed as an original work, contains many good obſervations, and ſome excellent rules for tranſlating well: but to theſe he ſeems not to have always paid due attention himſelf; and his tranſlation may be ſaid, like Pope's woman, to have no uniform character at all. He is, ſometimes, too ſcrupulouſly literal; and, ſometimes, too free a paraphraſt. His ſtile is incorrect, his diction impure, his expreſſions often trite and ill-choſen, and as often affectedly *neoterical.* It muſt, however, be allowed, that he has more frequently hit on the true meaning of his original, than any French tranſlator that went before him; that he is never, or rarely, obſcure; and that he is very ſeldom biaſſed by party prejudices.

Since Le Cene's verſion, ſeveral particular parts of the Bible have either been newly tranſlated, or improved on the Geneva verſion, by Le Clerc, Saurin, Beauſobre, Chais and other French Calviniſts in Holland.

Bruccioli's Italian verſion from the originals, or rather from the Latin of Pagninus, was firſt publiſhed at Venice in 1532; but the beſt edition is that of Zanetti in 1540. This verſion was interpolated, and adapted to the Vulgate, by Marmochini; whoſe edition, dedicated to the Biſhop of Rodez, appeared in 1538. It was alſo corrected and improved by Ruſticius, and publiſhed at Geneva in 1562. With all theſe pretended alterations, corrections and improvements, it is ſtill but a poor tranſlation, compared with that of Diodati, which was firſt publiſhed at Geneva in 1607. There

is an elegance and eaſe in this tranſlation that are extremely pleaſant to the reader, joined with a conciſeneſs, which one ſhould think hardly compatible with eaſe and elegance. F. Simon greatly injures him, when he ſays, he is rather a paraphraſt than a tranſlator; but this is not the only raſh aſſertion, which that Father has made.

Although the Spaniſh be, perhaps, of all the European tongues, that in which the Scriptures would appear in their greateſt dignity; we have, as yet, no Spaniſh verſion of them that deſerves much notice. Thoſe made by the Jews are barbarous beyond conception *, and that of De Reyna, with all De Valera's improvements, is little more than a ſervile verſion from the Latin of Pagninus and Leo Juda.

But to what degree of perfection a Spaniſh verſion is capable of being carried, is evident from a tranſlation of the book of Job, made, near two hundred years ago, by F. Luis de Leon.† I know

* The only compleat Spaniſh verſion of the Hebrew Bible, made by Jews, is that publiſhed at Ferrara in 1553; of which the Pentateuch had before been printed at Conſtantinople, in rabbinical Hebrew characters. From theſe, the Pentateuch and Aptharoth of Manaſſeh-ben-Iſrael, differ but very little. They are uſeful only as gloſſaries.

† Luis de Leon was an Auguſtinian friar, and interpreter of the Scripture in the Univerſity of Salamanca. He publiſhed, in his own life time, or rather his friends publiſhed without his knowledge, an excellent Spaniſh tranſlation of the Song of Solomon; for which he ſuffered five years impriſonment, in the dark and inacceſſible dungeons of the Inquiſition. But thoſe miſerable times are happily over; and his Job, which had been long known in manuſcript, was printed at Madrid, with all neceſſary privileges in 1779; together with his learned commentary, and another poetical verſion, which in many places rivals the ſublimity of the original. There is a tolerable Spaniſh tranſlation of Pindar by the ſame author.

not if there be, in any language, a verſion that, to the ſtricteſt fidelity, joins ſo much elegance, preciſion and perſpicuity.

I can ſay very little of the tranſlations that have been made into other European dialects; becauſe I am not in the leaſt acquainted with the languages in which they are written. But I am informed by thoſe who are, that they differ not much from our Engliſh verſion; which to ſome of them ſerved as a model. They are all ſtrictly Maſoretical; except that which was made, ſome years ago, into Manks; in the forming of which, I have been told by one of the tranſlators *, attention was paid to the various lections of manuſcripts and other ſources of emendation.

As Lewis has given a detailed, though confuſed, hiſtory of Engliſh Bibles, down to the year 1730; I ſhall only make a few remarks on the principal verſions; and add a catalogue of ſuch whole, or partial tranſlations, as have ſince been attempted.

The firſt compleat edition of an Engliſh verſion of the whole Bible, from the originals, is that of Tyndal's and Coverdale's together †. It was printed abroad in 1537, and known by the name of Matthew's Bible. The violent oppoſition, it had met with at home, ſeems to have ariſen more from the injurious reflections, contained in the prologues and notes, on the then eſtabliſhed religion, than from any capital defects in the verſion itſelf. It was

* The reverend Mr. Kelly of Windſor.

† From Geneſis to the end of Chronicles, and the book of Jonah, are by Tyndal; the reſt of the Old Teſtament by Coverdale. The whole New Teſtament is Tyndal's.

far from being a perfect tranſlation, it is true; but it was the firſt of the kind; and few firſt tranſlations will, I think, be found preferable to it. It is, aſtoniſhing how little obſolete the language of it is, even at this day; and, in point of perſpicuity and noble ſimplicity, propriety of idiom and purity of ſtile, no Engliſh verſion has yet ſurpaſſed it. The criticiſms of thoſe who wrote againſt it (we are ſorry to find Sir Thomas More among them) are generally too ſevere, often captious and ſometimes evidently unjuſt. Of terms nearly ſynonymous, Tyndal may have poſſibly choſen thoſe that were moſt favourable to his own religious notions; and, when his original admitted a double ſignification, preferred that which ſeemed the leaſt favourable to the tenets he had renounced. This was, doubtleſs, a partiality which every tranſlator ought carefully to avoid; but how few tranſlators have always been ſufficiently on their guard againſt its influence.

It was an idle affectation in Tyndal to tranſlate *overſeer*, *elder*, *congregation*, inſtead of *biſhop*, *prieſt*, *church;* as the latter, already become familiar Engliſh words, are, in reality, of the ſame import with thoſe he ſubſtituted in their place; and there is no more diverſity between the terms, (to uſe an expreſſion of Coverdale) than between *four-pence* and *a groat*. It was unfair, and perhaps inſidious, in him, to put *image* for *idol*, *ordinance* for *tradition*, *ſecret* for *myſtery* or *ſacrament:* but theſe, and ſuch like offenſive terms, might have been eaſily corrected; nor was it, for that, either

neceſſary or expedient to commit the whole work to the flames; which ſerved only to enhance its value, and gave it a greater currency. Burning ſuſpicious books is the readieſt way to multiply them; as perſecuting for religion is the ſureſt mean of propagating it.

Cranmer's *great* Bible, and all the other Bibles that were publiſhed during the reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. are only ſo many improved copies of Tyndal's and Coverdale's tranſlation. In ſome of them the additions that are found in the Greek or in the Latin Vulgate, though not in the preſent original, were judiciouſly inſerted; either in a ſmaller character, or with ſome diſtinguiſhing mark. Tyndal's prologues and notes were alſo generally omitted; and ſome of the moſt exceptionable words altered. The editions reviſed by Taverner recede the fartheſt from their prototype, and are, therefore, the worſt.

In Mary's days, the Engliſh refugees at Geneva ſet about making a new tranſlation, the model of which ſeems to have been the French one of Olivetan, lately reviſed by Calvin and Beza. Hence, and becauſe it was accompanied with marginal notes of the laſt mentioned author, it is known by the name of Beza's Bible. It became the favorite verſion of the puritan party, and went through a great many editions, during the reigns of Elizabeth and James; ſome of which are poſterior even to the laſt reviſion of the Bible. But as the quarter it came from, and the perſons who were con-

cerned in it, made it obnoxious to the Epiſcopalians, it was never received as a public ſtandard. King James, in the famous conference at Hampton Court, pronounced it to be the worſt of all Engliſh tranſlations; yet his own tranſlators borrowed more plentifully from it, than from any other; and, to ſay the truth, as a mere Maſoretic verſion, it has conſiderable merit.

In 1586 was publiſhed Parker's, or the Biſhops Bible, which was appointed to be read in churches, as Cranmer's had been before. The greateſt objection made to this tranſlation was, that it deviated too much from the original, in favour of the Greek and Latin verſions. This, we apprehend, would not, at preſent, be accounted a great defect; for the deviations from the original are rarely unwarranted; or, rather, they are only deviations from corrupted copies, or rabbinical comments. But, at that time, the idea had begun to prevail, that the Maſoretic text was inviolably to be adhered to; and this was, probably, the chief cauſe, why the Biſhops Bible was ſo little prized, and ſo ſoon ſuperſeded *.

For, on King James's acceſſion to the throne of England, a new tranſlation was immediately projected, and finiſhed in the ſpace of three or four years; although it was not publiſhed till 1611, when, *by his Majeſty's ſpecial command*, it was appointed to be read in

* This tranſlation having become extremely rare, a new edition of it was announced by Hogg in the year 1778: but this edition is a mere counterfeit; being an exact tranſcript of the Geneva Bible.

churches; and has continued, ever ſince, to be the public authorized verſion.

The means and the method employed to produce this tranſlation, promiſed ſomething extremely ſatisfactory; and great expectations were formed from the united abilities of ſo many learned men, ſelected for the purpoſe, and excited to emulation by the encouragement of a munificent Prince, who had declared himſelf the patron of the work. Accordingly, the higheſt eulogiums have been made on it, both by our own writers and by foreigners*; and, indeed, if accuracy, fidelity and the ſtricteſt attention to the letter of the text, be ſuppoſed to conſtitute the qualities of an excellent verſion, this of all verſions muſt, in general, be accounted the moſt excellent. Every ſentence, every word, every ſyllable, every letter and point ſeem to have been weighed with the niceſt exactitude, and expreſſed, either in the text or margin, with the greateſt preciſion. Pagninus himſelf is hardly more literal, and it was well remarked by Robertſon, above a hundred years ago, that it may ſerve for a lexicon of the Hebrew language, as well as for a tranſlation.

It is, however, confeſſedly not without its faults. Beſide thoſe, that are common to it with every verſion of that age, ariſing from

* F. Simon's *Critique* of this verſion is little to be regarded. He owns he had no other way of judging of it, but from ſome ſcraps tranſlated into Latin or French. It was thus the younger Racine criticized Milton; and thus that Voltaire, from whom better might have been expected (as he had a tolerable knowledge of the Engliſh) criticized a writer he was not able to imitate.

faulty originals and Maſoretic prepoſſeſſions, its own intrinſic and peculiar blemiſhes appear to be the following.

Firſt, from a ſuperſtitious attention to render the Hebrew and Greek into literal Engliſh, its authors adopted modes of expreſſion, which are abhorrent from the Engliſh idiom; and, perhaps, from that of all other modern tongues. Our ears, indeed, are now accuſtomed to this phraſeology; and the language is become familiar to us, by being the language of the national religion: but a proof that many of thoſe expreſſions are neither natural nor analogous, is, that they have never yet been able to force their way into common uſage, even in converſation; and he, who ſhould employ them, would be ſuppoſed to jeer at Scripture, or to affect the language of fanaticiſm. In ſhort, what Selden ſaid of it is ſtrictly true. "It "is rather tranſlated into Engliſh words, than into Engliſh phraſe." From the ſame cauſe, it is, in many places, obſcure and ambiguous, where a ſmall variation in the arrangement of the words, would have made it clear and unequivocal.

Secondly, there is a manifeſt want of uniformity in the mode of tranſlating *. This was, indeed, unavoidable. The different parts of the Bible were aſſigned to ſo many different perſons, or at leaſt

* Dr. Myles Smith, who wrote the preface, ſeems to have been ſenſible of this, when he apologizes, in a certain manner, for a want of "Identity of phrazing." This difference is obſervable, not only in the different portions of Scripture aſſigned to the different claſſes; but often in the ſame portion, not ſeldom in the ſame book, and ſometimes even in the ſame chapter, and ſame verſe.

to ſo many different *Quorums*; and although the whole was ultimately committed to the reviſal of ſix perſons, aſſembled for the purpoſe, it does not appear, that they made any great change in its firſt texture. When we conſider, that they were only nine months about this reviſion, we cannot well look for a rigorous examination of the fidelity of the verſion; much leſs, for a reduction of its ſtile to the ſame colour and complexion *. The books called *Apocrypha* are, in general, I think, better tranſlated than the reſt of the Bible; for which one reaſon may be, that the tranſlators of them were not cramped by the fetters of the Maſora.

Thirdly, King James's tranſlators miſtook the true meaning of a great many words and ſentences by depending too much on modern lexicons, and by paying too little attention to the ancient verſions. Many of thoſe miſtranſlations have been noted and rectified by different commentators, but many ſtill remain unnoticed, and ſeem to cry for amendment.

Fourthly, in compliance with a novel opinion, that not a word nor particle ſhould be in a vernacular verſion, that has not another word and particle, exactly correſponding with it, in the Hebrew; and, at the ſame time, to prevent an obſcurity, which would be the neceſſary conſequence of that mode of tranſlating; perhaps, alſo, to obviate the reproaches of want of fidelity, that had been thrown

* It was again reviſed by Biſhop Bilſon and Dr. Smith; but what they did, or how long they were employed in this reviſal, I have not been able to learn.

out againſt the Biſhops Bible, both by the Catholics and the Puritans; they encumbered their verſion with a load of uſeleſs Italics; often without the leaſt neceſſity, and almoſt always to the detriment of the text. In fact, either the words in Italics are virtually implied in the Hebrew, or they are not. In the former caſe they are a real part of the text, and ſhould be printed in the ſame character: in the latter, they are generally ill aſſorted and clumſy ekes, that may well be ſpared; and which often disfigure the narration under pretence of connecting it *.

Fifthly, King James's tranſlators, like all the tranſlators of their day, were too much guided by theological ſyſtem; and ſeem, on ſome occaſions, to have allowed their religious prejudices to have gotten the better of their judgment. To point out examples, would be an invidious taſk: but it is extremely proper that every tranſlator ſhould have them conſtantly in view, as ſo many cautionary mementos to himſelf.

In fine, through the conſtant fluctuation and progreſs of living languages, there are many words and phraſes, in the vulgar verſion, now become obſolete; a ſpecimen of which may be ſeen in Pilkington's judicious *Remarks*, publiſhed at Cambridge in 1759†. The

* Since writing the above, I am happy to find that the late Archbiſhop Secker was of the ſame opinion. In his valuable manuſcript notes on the Bible, to which, through the liberality of his preſent worthy ſucceſſor, I have had the moſt free and convenient acceſs; he has daſhed over many thouſands of *Italics*, in the copy of the Engliſh Bible he uſed; and, hardly ever without ſome improvement to the paſſage.

† There is in the Critical Review (vol. xviii. page 101) a liſt of words and phraſes, which

conſtruction, too, is frequently leſs grammatical, than the preſent ſtate of our language ſeems to require; and the arrangement of words and ſentences is often ſuch as produces obſcurity or ambiguity.

Literal as James's tranſlation is, it did not appear ſo to Gell, Canne and Ainſworth. The two firſt projected, and the laſt partly executed a new verſion, which was publiſhed in a folio volume in 1639*. It was formed, like Cajetan's Latin verſion, on this abſurd principle, that the Scripture cannot be tranſlated too literally; that every word and particle, nay the very arrangement of words and particles are full of myſtery, and ought to be preſerved with the greateſt attention. We are aſtoniſhed to find in a book written by a man of learning this ſtrange poſition: "The Holy Spirit "of God often intends a myſtery, and ſo leaves the letter ſeem- "ingly abſurd: ſuch ſeeming abſurdities are left for the honour of "God's Spirit, which clears the difficulties and ſets all right †.

But what ſhall we ſay of thoſe, who, at a much more enlightened period, have adopted the ſame ſervile plan? In the year 1773, was

the authors deemed obſolete or improper; ſome of which, however, are ſtill uſed by good writers. As for the long catalogue of words in Purver's appendix, there are at leaſt two thirds of them not only not obſolete, but often more proper than thoſe he would ſubſtitute in their place. Indeed, we ought not eaſily to reject a term, becauſe it is not, perhaps, of the firſt faſhion; eſpecially if it be expreſſive, euphonic, and ſufficiently removed from vulgarity. The nomenclature of our language is not yet ſo very copious, as to need to be diminiſhed.

* It contains only the Pentateuch, the Pſalms and the Song of Solomon. They had been ſeparately publiſhed before.

† Dr. Gell's preface to an Eſſay toward the amendment of the laſt Engliſh tranſlation of the Bible; printed at London in the year 1569.

publiſhed a new verſion of the Pentateuch, Joſhua, Judges, and the four books of Kings. It was a poſthumous work of Julius Bate, and is ſaid, in the editor's preface, to have been the reſult of "more "than thirty years indefatigable application to the ſtudy of the "Hebrew ſcriptures." He was undoubtedly well verſed in the Hebrew language, though he ſeems to have paid too little regard to the kindred dialects *: but his learning was deeply imbued with enthuſiaſm; and, on running from one ridiculous ſyſtem, he eagerly embraced another. He deſpiſed the rabbinical but admired the Hutchinſonian *Cabbala!* It muſt, however, be confeſſed that he has tranſlated many particular words and ſentences with great propriety; and his diviſions are frequently more natural than thoſe of the Maſoretes.

In the year 1764, Anthony Purver publiſhed his *New and literal tranſlation of all the books of the Old and New Teſtament, with notes critical and explanatory.* This is ſaid to have been the work of thirty years; and, indeed, it carries on the very face of it undeniable proofs of much reading and infinite labour. After all it is but a rude, incondite and unſhapely pyle; without order, ſymmetry or taſte. It has not even that ſingle indifferent quality which the Critical Reviewers too indulgently allow it to poſſeſs; that of exhibiting a faithful copy of the Maſoretic text; which, I aver, is much more accurately repreſented by the common tranſlation. I

* See preface to his Hebrew dictionary.

have paſſed this judgment on the honeſt, but not too modeſt Quaker the more freely, becauſe he himſelf is a moſt deſperate critic who ſpares no one, and dares his competitors to enter the liſts with him. The beſt we can ſay of him, is what Ovid ſays of Phaeton. He attempted what was above his forces, and bravely failed in the attempt—*magnis tamen excidit auſis*. Bad as this verſion is, a tranſlator muſt not think it beneath his notice: it may occaſionally be uſeful to him. He will very often ſee by it, what he is to ſhun; and ſometimes what he may imitate. In a field over-run with cockle, he may, now and then, find an ear of good wheat.

Beſide thoſe general tranſlations, we have ſmaller portions of Holy writ, tranſlated by different hands, ſince the beginning of this century, which it may not be here improper to mention.

A tranſlation of the book of Geneſis, by John Lookup, Eſq. was publiſhed in the year 1740, and dedicated to the Archbiſhop of Canterbury. He ſeems to have ſtudied, with attention, the genius of the original; and, in ſome places, has well expreſſed its meaning: but there is a ſtrange ſingularity in his choice of terms, that often excites ſurpriſe, and ſometimes riſibility.

A new verſion of the three firſt chapters of Geneſis with marginal illuſtrations and critical notes, was given by Abraham Dawſon in 1763; and ſoon after a verſion of the fourth and fifth chapters. Why the Critical Reviewers ſhould think this eſſay the work of a Deiſt, I cannot well conceive. The author is certainly a learned

man, and a judicious critic; and we wiſh he had proceeded in the ſame career.

Mr. Green of Cambridge publiſhed in 1762, his new tranſlation of the Pſalms, and in 1781 the poetical parts of the Old Teſtament: in both which works he has diſplayed much learning, judgment and taſte. We have only to regret that he paid ſo much deference to the Harian ſyſtem of Hebrew metre.

Still a model was wanting that ſhould claim every ſuffrage, and merit univerſal applauſe. Need I inform my intelligent reader that ſuch a model at length appeared in the year 1779; when Biſhop Lowth favoured the public with his new tranſlation of Iſaiah? never did ſacred criticiſm appear with greater dignity than in this invaluable work. Never were the gentleman, the ſcholar, the grammarian and the theologue more happily united.

So rare an example, ſet by ſuch a character, could not fail to be copied. Mr. Benjamin Blayney, Rector of Polſhott in Wilts, has lately publiſhed a tranſlation of Jeremiah, on the ſame plan; and with great ſucceſs. I truſt he is now employed in ſome other ſimilar work.

On the ſame plan Biſhop Newcome is labouring on the Minor Prophets; and great expectations are juſtly formed, from his well known abilities and acumen *.

* Biſhop Newcome's tranſlation has appeared; a moſt learned and valuable work, of which I am happy to have it in my power to avail myſelf, and from which, I foreſee, I ſhall derive

Mr. Hopkins, Vicar of Bolney, has given a corrected edition of the vulgar verſion of the book of Exodus; in which he has judiciouſly inſerted the Samaritan and Septuagint ſupplements; when he had reaſon to think them genuine. His notes are ſhort but generally appoſite. May neither "age nor infirmity" prevent him from "profecuting ſuch uſeful ſtudies *."

We have ſeveral Engliſh tranſlations of the Song of Solomon; ſome in verſe and ſome in proſe; and moſt of them have conſiderable merit. We have, likewiſe, poetical verſions of Job, the Pſalms, and other detached parts of Scripture; which may be occaſionally uſeful to a proſe-tranſlator: and there are a number of particular paſſages, throughout the whole Bible, well rendered and explained, in various critical Commentaries, Eſſays, Lectures and Sermons; of which a general collection would be of great utility.

Of the New Teſtament, beſide the verſion, already mentioned, of 1729; we have, ſince that, three compleat new tranſlations by

great advantages. I am only ſorry that I ſhould happen to differ from his Lordſhip about ſome of his RULES of tranſlating; or rather about ſome of the more remote corrollaries he deduces from them: while, at the ſame time his great judgment and taſte, and his eſtabliſhed character as a writer, make me heſitate and doubt about the propriety of ſome of my own. I ſhall conſider both at more leiſure and with new attention; and weigh his Lordſhip's reaſons with all poſſible care and impartiality. In one rule, at leaſt, we are perfectly agreed: "The "critical ſenſe of paſſages ſhould be conſidered, and not the opinions of any denomination of "Chriſtians. The tranſlators ſhould be philologiſts, not controverſialiſts."

* See his preface, p. xv.

Wynne, Worſley and Harwood; two of St. Matthew by Scott and Wakefield; and we ſoon expect, from the pen of Dr. Campbell, a capital work on the four Goſpels. But of all theſe I ſhall have occaſion to ſpeak, more at large, in proper time and place.

A ſociety lately formed for *promoting the knowledge of the Scriptures* have already publiſhed ſome *numbers of Commentaries and Eſſays*; in which, among other things, they propoſe to give "an accurate tranſlation of the paſſage to be explained, with proper diviſions into paragraphs and ſentences, and pointed with the utmoſt correctneſs." We applaud the plan, and heartily wiſh them ſucceſs: may we take the liberty to beg of them, to beware of ſyſtem *.

From the above review of the principal verſions made by Proteſtants, it will, I preſume, appear, that their chief and peculiar imperfection is owing to the tranſlators having followed too implicitly the Maſoretic text, and paid too little regard to the ancient verſions. Let us next ſee what are the ſpecial defects of the tranſlations, that have been made by Catholics.

The number of theſe, indeed, is comparatively ſmall; an idea having long prevailed, that the Scripture ſhould not be tranſlated into vulgar tongues. It is hard to reconcile this idea with any principle of reaſon, religion, or ſound policy; and we muſt aſcribe

* The numbers of this work, which are publiſhed occaſionally, are ſold by Johnſon, in St. Paul's church-yard.

it, with ſome other abſurdities, to the ignorance and prejudices of a barbarous age. The firſt poſitive decree on this ſubject was formed, I believe, in a dioceſan ſynod at Thouloufe, in the year 1229; and is not the only exceptionable canon deviſed by that aſſembly. In the brighter days of Chriſtianity it was not ſo. The works of Chryſoſtome, Baſil, Ambroſe, Jerom, Auſtin, are full of the moſt preſſing exhortations to read the Scripture; and the reaſons that have, in latter times, been urged againſt that practice by Mallet and other ſuch writers * deſerve not a ſerious anſwer. The prohibition was ſo far from anſwering the end propoſed by it; that it had a quite contrary effect. The ſeparatiſts from the church of Rome have uſed no weapon with more ſucceſs againſt her, than this one, that was intentionally, but indiſcreetly, forged for her particular defence.

It is remarkable, that this doctrine has chiefly obtained in thoſe countries, where the *Inquiſition* has been eſtabliſhed. In France and Germany a different ſyſtem has at all times, more or leſs, prevailed, in ſpite of the endeavours of ſome pragmatic zealots to introduce a leſs liberal diſcipline. Not to mention a number of manuſcript verſions, that were in uſe before the invention of typography; there are, at leaſt, twelve printed editions of a French Bible prior to that of Olivetan, and ſeveral German ones before Luther's. Nor was the prohibitory doctrine always countenanced in Italy. We meet

* See a book entitled *Collectio auctorum vulgares verſiones damnantium.* Paris 1661.

with thirteen editions of De Malermi's verſion, in the ſpace of leſs than half a century; and all anterior to the aera of the Reformation. From the diſpoſition of the preſent intelligent Pontiff, and from his expreſs declaration, That the Scriptures "are ſources to which all "ought to have free acceſs, in order to draw from them, both a "ſound doctrine and a pure morality," * we have reaſon to expect, that Italian Bibles will ſoon be as common on the other, as French Bibles are on this ſide of the Alps.

Another general prejudice among the Catholics was, that they muſt tranſlate from the Latin Vulgate. This, indeed, was at one time neceſſary: for there were few or none capable of tranſlating from the originals: but why the ſame practice was continued, after the revival of Greek and Hebrew learning, is harder to account for; though the following probable cauſes may be aſſigned.

One, perhaps, was, that they might not be thought to imitate the new reformers; who affected to cry up the originals, in proportion as they cried down the Vulgate. Oppoſition, we know, begets oppoſition. I have read a book written by a Neapolitan Jeſuit, in which he gravely returns thanks to Heaven, that he was ignorant of Greek and Hebrew; for that the knowledge of theſe tongues, was a ſure ſign of hereſy.

* *Optimè ſentis, ſi Chriſti fideles ad lectionem divinarum literarum magnopere excitandos exiſtimes. Illi enim ſunt fontes uberrimi, qui cuique patere debent, ad hauriendam et morum et doctrinae ſanctitatem.* From the Pope's letter to Abbate Martini in 1778.

But another more ſpecious, though not more ſolid reaſon, for tranſlating from the Latin, was derived from the Council of Trent's having declared it to be an authentic verſion. This, as I have already ſaid, was by many conſtrued into an abſolute and excluſive authenticity; which gave the Vulgate a preference to the Originals themſelves. It is plain, however, from the very tenor of the decree, that nothing could be farther from the meaning of the Council: and it has been always allowed by the moſt learned of the Catholic party, that the Vulgate received no other additional authority from the Synod's declaration, but that of being appointed the ſole public Latin verſion. The Synod did not, could not, give it the ſmalleſt degree of intrinſic value which it had not before: for if it was not, before, an authentic verſion, there had been no authentic verſion in the Latin church for a thouſand years.

The decree of the Council, then, did nothing more than what has been done in moſt Proteſtant countries: it eſtabliſhed one particular Latin verſion, as a public ſtandard; to be uſed in the church-office and in the ſchools of divinity: and ſurely of all Latin verſions, then extant, the Vulgate, in every reſpect, deſerved the preference. But never did it enter into the minds of that or any other council to ordain, that any verſion, however excellent, ſhould ſupplant the originals; or that no other tranſlation ſhould be made from them.

The only plauſible reaſon that can be offered for tranſlating from the Latin, rather than from the originals is, that, the Vulgate

having been once adopted as the public Latin verſion, uniformity ſeemed to require that all vernacular verſions ſhould be conſonant thereto. But if this motive had unluckily influenced St. Jerom, we ſhould at this day have no Vulgate: for, from the ſame principle, he would have been obliged to tranſlate from the Greek; which had been much more generally received, as a public ſtandard, than ever the Latin was.

It is well known, that there are many paſſages in the Vulgate badly rendered. It is alſo allowed that other faults have crept into it, ſince the days of its author; many of which were not corrected, even by the laſt reviſors: are we to tranſlate theſe faults, and retain thoſe renderings, for the ſake of uniformity? When the Vulgate and the originals agree, which is generally the caſe, a tranſlation, made from the latter, will neceſſarily be conſonant with the former; and, at the ſame time, vouch for its fidelity. Where the originals are manifeſtly, or probably, corrupted, whilſt the Vulgate manifeſtly, or probably, reads right; ſtill a good tranſlation will agree with the Vulgate: but is it in the leaſt reaſonable that, where the Vulgate is manifeſtly, or probably, erroneous, the tranſlation ſhould be erroneous too? He muſt be a ſturdy *Vulgatiſt* indeed, who maintains ſo ridiculous a poſition.

The very idea of tranſlating from a tranſlation is a ſtrange idea. We have an excellent French verſion of Plutarch, by Amyot: but would any Engliſhman ſit down to tranſlate Plutarch through the

medium of Amyot's verſion? Or could we bear a tranſlation of Q. Curtius, even from the admired verſion of Vaugelas? In the very firſt transfuſion, from one idiom to another, ſome part of the author muſt neceſſarily evaporate: how much more muſt he loſe, on a ſecond or third operation*?

But moſt Catholic tranſlators have not only tranſlated from the Vulgate, but made their verſions more ſervilely literal than was neceſſary, even if they had tranſlated immediately from the originals. This is the more aſtoniſhing, becauſe the Vulgate is a free and liberal verſion; and, as far as Jerom is concerned, not altogether inelegant: whereas the tranſlations that have been made from it, if we except one or two, are ſtiff and barbarous beyond conception. Hence they are often unintelligible†. It would be, moreover, eaſy to ſhew that the greateſt part of thoſe, who have tranſlated from the Vulgate, have very often miſtranſlated it, from not underſtanding or not attending to the originals. The words of the Vulgate are Latin words, it is true; but they have ſometimes ſo uncommon acceptations, and are ſo peculiarly phrazed, that it requires a thorough acquaintance with the Oriental ſtile and knowledge of

* Some parts of the Vulgate are tranſlations, from tranſlations.

† "A cloſe tranſlation made at ſecond hand from a free one muſt carry with it a ſtrong "tincture of the medium through which it has paſſed; at the ſame time that it has no chance of "recovering any thing that may have been loſt of the native and genuine colour of the firſt "compoſition." See a ſenſible letter to the Critical Reviewers, vol. xxix. page 78.

the Oriental tongues, to comprehend their meaning; particularly in the poetical books.

It is evident, I think, from what has been ſaid, that a tranſlator, who works on the originals, can derive but little help from verſions made from the Vulgate: and therefore I will not detain the reader with a long enumeration of them.

I have ſeen but four French tranſlations made from the Latin: that of Louvain, that of Benoit, that of Corbin, and that of Saçi. The firſt two are little more than the Geneva verſion accommodated to the Vulgate: the third is beneath criticiſm: the laſt is an elegant, ſecondary, verſion; and has, with very little variation, been a text-book to all the French commentators for a century paſt. It appears, however, to be too much a paraphraſe; and ſeldom retains the ſimplicity and dignity, even of the Vulgate verſion *.

Until the year 1750, the German Catholics had no tolerable verſion of the Bible. That of Dietenberg is a bad tranſcript, or rather miſerable interpolation, of Luther's; and Ulenberg's is diſguſtingly literal and obſcure. But, at the forementioned period, a new tranſlation was publiſhed by the Benedictines of Ettenheim-Munſter, under the direction of F. Cartier, which is, I think, the beſt tranſlation from the Vulgate, that has yet been made. The reaſon

* Saçy's verſion was reviſed and republiſhed by F. Carrieres, with ſhort notes inſerted in the text, in Italics; which give it a ſtill more rambling, and often even a ludicrous air.

is obvious: the authors had recourſe to the originals, in all dubious caſes; and did not ſtrictly adhere to the letter of their text *.

The Flemings have two tolerable verſions, the one by De Witt, and the other by Vander-Schuren: but the French language has, for ſome time paſt, been ſo much cultivated by them, that Saçi's Bible is almoſt as frequently to be met with in the French Netherlands as in France itſelf.

There are two or three old Italian tranſlations made from the Vulgate †; or adapted to it, from Pagninus's Latin verſion: but they have not been reprinted for many years back; and have, in reality, little to recommend them. I have not ſeen Martini's recent verſion, but I am informed it is very elegant.

In Spain there is not, I believe, at this day a ſingle edited verſion of the whole Bible. That, which was printed in 1516, was ſo totally deſtroyed, that hardly a copy of it is to be found. Some particular books have been lately publiſhed; and it is not to be doubted but the reſt will ſoon follow. The torch of learning is but newly lighted up in that ingenious nation: but, if we are not

* *Notandum quod illi viris eruditis non ſatis probentur qui verſionem Vulgatae noſtrae de verbo ad verbum adornandam eſſe antumant. Nam praeterquam quod indè ſacri textus obſcuritas minimè tollatur, alienum inſuper ſenſum, ſpectato verborum tenore, ſaepius elici manifeſtum eſt.* Praefat. in Biblia Latino-Germanica. Conſtantiae, 1763.

† That of De Malermi, firſt publiſhed in the year 1471; that of Marmochini in 1538, and, perhaps, another whoſe author is not known. See Le Long.

greatly miſtaken, it will ſoon break forth into a blaze of uncommon ſplendor*.

Our Saxon anceſtors had vernacular verſions of the Scripture as early as the reign of Alfred, who is, himſelf, ſaid to have been one of the tranſlators. Some parts of Aelfric's verſion of the Old Teſtament were publiſhed by Thwaites in 1698. And we have two different editions of a Saxon New Teſtament. All theſe were made from the Vulgate. Hampole, Wiclif and Perry tranſlated alſo from the Latin; though, in ſome of their verſions, they noted the differences of the Hebrew and Greek, from St. Jerom, Bede and De Lyra †.

From the days of Wiclif there was no verſion made from the Vulgate until the year 1582; when the Engliſh Catholics, who had, in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, taken refuge in Flanders, and were now removed to Reims on account of the war, publiſhed a tranſlation of the New Teſtament only, in one quarto volume. The publication of the Old did not take place till after their return to Douay in 1609. Hence the whole verſion, which

* I am juſt now informed by a gentleman, lately arrived from Spain, that a new Spaniſh verſion of the whole Scriptures is actually preparing for the preſs; and that, in the mean time, De Valeras' tranſlation is permitted to be read; the copies of which are fought with avidity and bought up at any price, at Paris, Amſterdam and other places they can be found in.

† It is a pity the various manuſcripts of Wiclif's tranſlation, as well as the more ancient Saxon ones, are not carefully collated and publiſhed. We ſhould, by their means, ſee the ſtate of the Vulgate at different periods, and be able to trace with more certainty the progreſs of our language.

is in three volumes, is known by the name of the Douay Bible. It is a literal and barbarous tranſlation from the Vulgate, before its laſt reviſion; and accompanied with acrimonious and injurious annotations. Their reſidence in a foreign country, and what they deemed a cruel exile from their own, had corrupted the tranſlator's language, and ſoured their tempers; and it was, unhappily, the common cuſtom of thoſe lamentable times, to ſeaſon every religious controverſy with gall and vinegar. We do not find that Withers, Fulke and Cartwright, who drew their quills againſt the Douay annotators, were a bit more courteous in their retorts.

The late moſt pious Dr. Chaloner reviſed the Douay verſion, on the Clementine edition of the Vulgate; greatly curtailed the annotations; and corrected the ſtile, chiefly from King James's tranſlation. There are two editions of this reviſion; one in the year 1750, and the other in 1764; both in five volumes, ſmall octavo. I am told another edition is preparing by the gentlemen of the Engliſh college at Douay; and propoſals for republiſhing it at Dublin, in one quarto volume, are now handed about in London.

Mr. Caryl, a gentleman who had followed the fortune of King James II. publiſhed, at St. German's, a new verſion of the Pſalms in 1700; in which, taking Bellarmine for his guide, he has often expreſſed the meaning of the Vulgate, much better than the Douay tranſlators.

In 1719 Dr. Cornelius Nary publiſhed his New Teſtament at

Dublin, in one volume octavo; and Dr. Witham's appeared in 1730, in two volumes octavo. There are many good renderings in both theſe verſions.

Mr. W. Webſter, curate of St. Dunſtan's in the weſt, tranſlated the New Teſtament from the Vulgate, through the medium of F. Simon's French verſion, and publiſhed it at London, in two volumes in quarto, in 1730.

I have in my poſſeſſion a manuſcript New Teſtament prepared for the preſs, by the late Mr. Robert Gordon of the Scotch college at Paris; in which ſome conſiderable miſtranſlations of all the preceding verſions are noted and rectified *.

But although the Catholics, in general, have made their vernacular verſions of the Bible from the Vulgate; they have not done ſo, without exception. Two of the forementioned Italian tranſlations, are profeſſedly made from the originals. In France, beſides Codurc's verſion of Job, Proverbs, Eccleſiaſticus and the Song of Solomon, we find a tranſlation of the Pſalms by Rodolphe le Maitre; another by Iſaac le Maitre, and another by Dupin; all made from the Hebrew in the laſt century; not to mention two compleat manuſcript verſions of the whole Bible; one by Dom. Loubineau, a Benedictine monk; and the other by F. Feraud of the Oratory *.

* I owe this verſion to Mr. Marmaduke, an ingenious but not very fortunate bookſeller in London; who has alſo favoured me with his own curious manuſcript remarks on the Douay Bible, and on Dr. Chaloner's reviſion of it.

† See Le Long. append. ad Biblioth. ſacram.

In the year 1737 a new verſion of the Pſalms was publiſhed by Dom. Maur d'Antine; and in 1739 appeared Le Gros's firſt edition of *The Holy Bible tranſlated from the original texts, with the various readings of the Vulgate*, &c. printed on a very ſmall type, and in one thick octavo volume. It was republiſhed, with the author's laſt corrections, at Cologne, in 1753, in ſix volumes in twelves. In this tranſlation the additions of the Vulgate are inſerted in the ſame characters with the text; but within crotchets. What is added from other ancient verſions is alſo within crotchets, but in Italics; and the ſupplements, deemed neceſſary to correct or illuſtrate the text, are in Italics, without crotchets.

About the middle of this century, a ſchool of Capuchins was formed at Paris, under the direction of Abbé de Villefroi, for the laudable purpoſe of elucidating the original Scriptures. The Popes Benedict XIV. and Clement XIII. were ſo well pleaſed with the deſign, that they both teſtified their approbation by ſpecial briefs; and the latter honoured the little ſociety with the title of *Clementine*. Beſides an elegant tranſlation of the Pſalms and ſome other books of the Old Teſtament, they have already publiſhed a great many volumes of *Principes diſcutés*, in which there is much ingenuity and conſiderable erudition: but a ſtrong tincture of rabbiniſm imbibed from their maſter, and a violent attachment to a ſpecious but deluſive and dangerous ſyſtem of interpretation, have often led them aſide from the right road, and expoſed them to

the too ſevere though juſt animadverſions of more rational critics *.

We have alſo a curious and fanciful French verſion of the Pſalms from the Hebrew by Laugeois; in which, although he has certainly taken by far too great liberties with his original, and given novel and arbitrary ſignifications to a number of Hebrew words, there are, nevertheleſs, many elegant and ſome uncommonly happy renderings.

The amiable and pious author of *Spectacle de la nature* left behind him a French verſion of the Pſalms and ſome other ſmall portions of Scripture, which, though profeſſedly made from the Vulgate, has a conſtant alluſion to the Hebrew, and contains ſome valuable elucidations, eſpecially in the notes.

The laſt publiſhed French verſion of the Pſalms is that of my old condiſciple the Abbé Conſtant, which appeared in 1783, in four volumes in 12mo, and has, I am told, conſiderable merit.

But a ſtill more important work has been recently announced: a French tranſlation of the whole Bible by the late F. Houbigant; the publication of which is committed to his learned colleague F. Lalande; and will not, we hope, be long delayed.

Having thus ſeen what helps a tranſlator may derive from former verſions, whether in his own or other languages; let us next ſee what aſſiſtance he is likely to receive from interpreters and com-

* See *Jugement ſur quelques traductions des Pſeaumes*, par L'Advocat. *Examen du Pſeautier François des Peres Capucins*, par Houbigant.

mentators. Indeed if the light thrown upon the Sacred Writings, were in proportion to the number of thoſe, who have attempted to illuſtrate them, there would not, at this day, remain the leaſt ſhade of obſcurity: all would be obvious, plain and eaſy. But of above a myriad of names that appear in the long liſt of interpreters, nine thouſand and nine hundred may, without much detriment, be ſtruck off: and, even of the remaining hundred, there are hardly fifty who are not mere compilators, or ſervile copyiſts of one another.

One, who has not read the Fathers, might be apt to imagine that great reſources were to be found in their writings. But whoever looks for that, will be miſerably diſappointed. The Chriſtian writers of the firſt two centuries were men of great probity; but, generally, of little learning and leſs taſte. They tranſmitted to poſterity the *Depoſitum*, which they had received from the Apoſtles and their immediate ſucceſſors, with great honeſty, earneſtneſs and ſimplicity; and recommended the doctrines they taught more by the ſanctity of their lives than by the depth of their erudition. They form ſo many invaluable links, in the golden chain of univerſal and Apoſtolical tradition; but they afford very little help towards clearing up the dark paſſages of Scripture.

The following ages produced a conſiderable number of truly learned, and of ſome very eloquent men; but few of them had the qualifications neceſſary to form a good Bible-interpreter. There are

many excellent homilies on almoſt every part of Holy Writ, and the juſt application of an infinite number of particular texts to the moſt ſalutary purpoſes of *inſtructing*, *exhorting* and *reproving*, in the volumes of Clement, Cyprian, Cyril, Athanaſius, Baſil, Ambroſe, Auguſtine, Leo and the Gregories of Nazianzum, Niſſa and Rome; and, in theſe the preacher will always be ſure to meet with the beſt models of true Chriſtian eloquence, joined with the ſoundeſt morality. But, if we except Ephrem the Syrian, Origen, Euſebius, Theodoret, Chryſoſtome, Procopius and Olympiadorus among the Greeks; and Jerom alone among the Latins; I will venture to ſay, that we ſhall not eaſily find, in all the reſt, a thouſand lines that one would chuſe to copy over, in a modern work of Scripture criticiſm. They generally contented themſelves with quoting ſuch copies of the Greek or Latin tranſlations as they had at hand; or, perhaps, often with quoting ſuch parts of them as they could recollect from memory; without ever comparing, or being indeed able to compare them with the originals: and when they could not find a plauſible literal explanation of the text thus quoted, they had recourſe to figure and allegory *.

* This diſpoſition to allegorize, which has more or leſs prevailed in every age, ought alſo to be numbered amongſt the cauſes of imperfect tranſlations: in as much as it evidently determined tranſlators to adopt, of two or more probable renderings, that which moſt favoured their own propenſity. The example and authority of Origen ſerved greatly to propagate this pernicious cuſtom; from the contagion of which few of the ſucceeding Fathers eſcaped. The works of Ambroſe, Auguſtine and the Roman Gregory are full of ſuch puerile interpretations:

In the ſucceeding degenerate and dark period, the ſtudy of the Scripture was much neglected; and more commentaries were made on the Decretals and the Maſter of Sentences, than on Moſes and the Prophets: yet the firſt part of this period, which we may call the brazen age of Chriſtianity, produced a Bede, an Alcuin and a Rabanus; in whoſe commentaries, if we find little original, we have, at leaſt, a tolerable ſelection from prior commentators. But from the end of the ninth, to the beginning of the fifteenth century, Oecomonius, Theophylactus and De Lyra are almoſt the only writers on this ſubject, whoſe works deſerve a peruſal.

On the revival of letters, a whole legion of gloſſariſts, commentators, and paraphraſts aroſe; but not many of them added to the former ſtock of Scriptural knowledge. The conteſt was, who ſhould write the largeſt volumes, crowd their pages with the greateſt number of quotations, and ſay the moſt ill-natured things of thoſe who happened to be of a different opinion. Not only did the Catholic and the Proteſtant write commentaries for the purpoſe of confuting one another; but the Scripture became a common arſenal, whence the Dominican drew arms againſt the Jeſuit, the Je-

but it is aſtoniſhing to find the acute and rational Jerom ſometimes carried away in the common vortex. Although both the context and the example of the Septuagint ſhould have led him to tranſlate Gen. xxvi. 17. "in the *valley* of Gerar", yet he prefers "in the *torrent* of Gerar;" for this fine reaſon; that Iſaac, after having been raiſed to ſuch a pitch of greatneſs, could not poſſibly have dwelt in a valley. *Neque enim Iſaac, poſtquam magnificatus eſt, in valle habitare potuit.*

ſuit againſt the Dominican, and the Auguſtinian againſt both: while, on the other hand, it ſupplied various weapons to the Lutheran, the Calviniſt, the Socinian, the Anabaptiſt, and every other denomination of pretended Reformers *.

But though ſcarcely two interpreters agreed in their explanations, one thing was common to them all. Inſtead of endeavouring to free the text from the adventitious rubbiſh, that time and blundering tranſcribers had heaped upon it; they applied their whole art and induſtry, to convert that rubbiſh into genuine ore; or, at leaſt, into ſuch mixt metal, as was current in their own communion. If a few candid and impartial men, ſuch as Eraſmus, Druſius, Piſcator, Vatablus, Mercerus, Cajetan, Grotius, Capellus, &c. had the courage to deviate from the common track, they

* To this we owe yet another cauſe of the imperfection of modern tranſlations. Not ſatisfied with eſtabliſhing their reſpective tenets, from the ſuppoſed meaning of the words; they ſometimes ventured to fit the words themſelves to the meaning they wiſhed them to have; and waving, as Gill obſerves, whatever ſeemed to make againſt them, they choſe ſuch terms as ſuited beſt with their own intereſt, opinions, and prejudices. Many, and I fear too juſt, mutual reproaches have been made on this head. I make little account of the invectives of ſuch violent and cavilling writers as Frizon, Veron, Martyn, and Ward; or of the angry retaliations of Amana, Cartwright, Withers, James, and Fulke. They often, on both ſides, catched at mere ſhadows, and found deſigned miſtranſlations, where there was no miſtranſlation at all. But ſtill I believe there was more or leſs ground for reciprocal impeachment; and I have hardly ſeen a modern verſion, in which I could not diſcern ſome viſible marks of party-zeal. The age of polemical ſcurrility is, or ought to be, now over; and writers of every perſuaſion will henceforth, we truſt, reciprocally aſſiſt one another, towards diſcovering the genuine ſignification of ſuch texts or terms as admit of ambiguity; without inſidiouſneſs or rancour.

were pointed out by all parties as ſuſpicious and dangerous writers; loaded with injuries and maledictions; and ſometimes obliged, according to the teſtimony of Mariana, to plead their cauſe in chains. Yet it is chiefly in their works that we are to look for almoſt all that is truly valuable in the commentaries of the laſt and preceding centuries.

The young eager Biblical ſtudent, who ſets out with a reſolution of reading whatever has been written on the ſubject, is frightened, on opening his Le Long, at the formidable hoſt of authors he has to encounter; and, if he be not very ſteady in his purpoſes, will be apt to recoil, and decline the enterpriſe: but let him not deſpair; I will venture to aſſure him that the quinteſſence of all he ſeeks for is to be found, judiciouſly collected, and methodically arranged, in Poole's *Synopſis*. Had I always been convinced of this truth, I ſhould have ſpared myſelf much fruitleſs labour, and ſaved a great deal of loſt time: but experience, although a ſure, is a ſlow teacher, *et longo poſt tempore venit*. Let us huſband the moments that yet remain, and endeavour to employ them more uſefully.

For, within theſe laſt hundred years, things have taken a different turn; and ſince Capellus pointed out the right way, a number of critics have trodden it with ſucceſs. By their continued and concurring efforts, the avenues to the ſanctuary have been gradually cleared; Maſoretic prejudices have been removed; religious animo-

ſity has in a great meaſure ſubſided; and the learned, of all perſuaſions, can now bear to walk in the ſame path, without juſtling one another.

This, like moſt other branches of critical learning, begun to flouriſh firſt in France: thence it found its way into Britain; and is, now, making a rapid progreſs over all Europe, eſpecially among the northern nations.

To enumerate all the uſeful books and tracts, that have been written on this ſubject, during the forementioned period, would lead me beyond the bounds I have preſcribed to myſelf: but as ſome of my readers may, poſſibly, wiſh to know, by whom this important revolution, in ſacred literature, has been principally effected; I will juſt mention ſuch of them, as appear to me to have "laboured more abundantly" than the reſt; without meaning to throw any ſort of reflection on thoſe I may omit.

The works of Capellus, the founder of this *New Academy*, will always claim a particular attention. There are, in all his writings, a clearneſs, a method, and a force that ſhould provoke the emulation of every Biblical critic: though few, I fear, will be able to attain them in the ſame degree. A new edition of his *Critica Sacra* was publiſhed by Vogel at Leipſic in 1777.—Although Bochart be a tedious writer, and although many of his conjectures be extremely dubious, he will ſeldom be conſulted without advantage.—The *Exercitations* and ſome other works of Morinus contain a great

number of judicious obſervations, blended with ſome paradoxes.—F. Simon's Critical Hiſtory is, notwithſtanding its few oddities, a moſt capital work; and the firſt, we believe, in which are laid down juſt and rational principles, for having a good vernacular tranſlation of the Bible.—Much juſt criticiſm is found diſperſed in the works of Huet, Renaudot, Natalis Alexander, Lamy, Thomaſſin; the Diſſertations of Dupin; the Diſſertations, Prefaces, Commentary, and Biblical Dictionary of Calmet; the additional Diſſertations and notes of his abridgers; Father Tournemines *Prolegomena* to his edition of Menochius; Menochius's own Annotations, and the ſhort but excellent Notes of Emanuel Sa; Pezron's *Antiquité des tems*, with its defence againſt Martianay; Martianay's own pieces on the ſame ſubject, and his Preface and Notes to his edition of St. Jerom; Le Quien's and Souciet's anſwers to Pezron; Montfaucon's Preface and Notes to Origen's Hexapla, with many ſcattered remarks in his other works; Houbigant's excellent Prolegomena, Prefaces, and Notes to his Latin verſion of the Bible; the work of the Capuchines already mentioned; the Theſes and little-poſthumous pieces of L'Advocat *; Conſtant's Commentary on

* Firſt Hebrew profeſſor in the chair of Sorbonne, erected in the year 1751 by the Duke of Orleans, for the purpoſe of reviving Oriental learning in the Univerſity of Paris, and of explaining the Hebrew ſcriptures. No man was more capable of fulfilling this double object than L'Advocat. He had a penetrating genius, an aſtoniſhing memory, a correct judgment, and an exquiſite taſte. He was the moſt univerſal ſcholar, the moſt pleaſant teacher, the moſt benevolent man and the moſt moderate theologian I ever knew. Had he lived a little longer

the Pſalms, lately publiſhed; beſides a number of memoires, diſſertations, and occaſional remarks, in the ſeveral journals of Paris, Trevoux, Verdun, Amſterdam, the Hague, and Geneva—all which are deſerving of the tranſlator's notice, and will all afford both information and entertainment. Nor are the works of the French Refugees in Holland to be neglected; particularly thoſe of Le Clerc, Le Cene, Spanheim, Baſnage, Beauſobre, Martin, Chais, Roques, Saurin; moſt of whom were extremely capable of carrying ſacred criticiſm to a great degree of perfection; had they been leſs wedded to old prepoſſeſſions, and leſs addicted to theological ſyſtem.

Among the ſacred critics of Italy, the moſt diſtinguiſhed are Bartolocci, Cardinal Thomaſi, Bianchini, Diodati*, Ugolini, Fabricy, De Magiſtris, De Roſſi, Georgi, Poch, Setaro, Borgia, Anſaldi; many of whom are yet alive; and, I doubt not, heartily labouring in the ſame vineyard.

In Germany a conſtellation of writers have lately ariſen; who have diſpelled more clouds, and cleared up more obſcure paſſages of Scripture, than perhaps the writers of any other nation; our

and enjoyed more leiſure to accompliſh the work he meditated on the Scripture, we ſhould now poſſeſs a treaſure of great value; but a weakly conſtitution and too conſtant an application to his profeſſional duties hurried him away in his 56th year, to the great regret of all who knew him, but of none more than of him who dedicates theſe lines to his memory.

* Not the ſame with the tranſlator of the Bible.

own not excepted: although they are not yet arrived at the zenith they fairly promiſe to attain. At the head of theſe we place the venerable Michaelis, one of the moſt learned and judicious modern critics: nor will Biorn-Sthal, Bruns, Fiſcher, Haſencamp, Gottfried, Lilienthal, Schulze, Oberlin, Storke, Outhovius, Schoetgenius, Starck, Koppe, Schnurrer, Eichorn, Cramer, Teller, Scheidius, Biel, Knappe, Doederleim, Dathe, Rare, Grieſbach, Velthuſen, Woide, Maldenhover, Adler, Birch, and other reſpectable names, grudge the veteran this honour of precedence; when it is allowed, that every one of themſelves will be a precedent and a model in his turn. There are alſo many pieces in the literary diaries of Leiden, Leipſic, Goetingen, Saxa-Gotha, and Berlin, which the curious and inquiſitive indagator will be glad to have diſcovered and peruſed *.

It may ſeem an unneceſſary affectation to give a catalogue of Engliſh writers; who, ſince the beginning of this century, have ſo largely contributed to emancipate ſacred criticiſm, from the fetters forged by credulity and ſuperſtition; as the greateſt part of my readers may be ſuppoſed to be, at leaſt, as well acquainted with them as myſelf: but, beſides, that I cannot, without ingratitude, ſuppreſs the obligations I lie under to thoſe of my country-

* The Biblical ſtudent will alſo be glad to know that Mr. Maty's new Review contains the earlieſt intelligence of foreign publications of every kind; and particulary thoſe that relate to ſacred criticiſm.

men who have walked before me in the ſame career, and ſmoothed ſo many places of the rugged path; I obſerve, with concern, that there are others, who endeavour to throw obſtacles in the way; and deter many from entering into it, who might be capable of making uncommon progreſs.

It is not eaſy to root out old prejudices even from the minds of the learned. The belief of an immaculate original is not yet univerſally exploded; and there are who think religion is in danger, if but a ſingle letter or point be altered or expunged. As long as this idea obtains, little more will be done among us towards clearing up the Hebrew writings, than has been done already. Poole, Prideaux, Patrick, Pearce, Hammond, Henry, Whitby, Wells, Wall, Waterland, Clarendon, Clarke, Locke, Sale, Sykes, Stackhouſe, Dodd, Watſon, and ſome others of leſs note have corrected many miſtranſlations of our preſent verſion; and we are greatly indebted to them for their learned labours; but ſome of them would have laboured much more ſucceſsfully, if they had raiſed their ſuperſtructures on a better foundation than the ſuppoſed integrity of the Maſoretic text.

We are not, then, to conclude from the great number of expoſitors, that therefore the Scriptures are thoroughly expounded. The generality of our commentators, like thoſe of other nations, are either blind followers of ſome particular theological ſyſtem; or drudging compilators from different ſyſtems. The huge maſſes

of indigeſted matter, that iſſue yearly from the preſſes of Fleet-Street and Pater-Noſter-Row, are generally better calculated to throw ridicule on the ſacred text, than to explain it; and oftener furniſh the infidel with ſpecious pretexts, for queſtioning the truths of religion, than the believer with ſolid arguments to ſupport them. Expunge from thoſe motly performances the unmeaning myſtic jargon, the nauſeous cant of enthuſiaſm, and the trite and tedious maxims of a common-place morality; all that is leſt behind of any value may be compreſt into a nut-ſhell. Yet theſe are the guides that direct the people in their Biblical reſearches. By theſe the minds of the vulgar are early tinctured with that fanatic zeal, that religious rancour, that horrid intolerantiſm; the fatal effects of which we ſo lately experienced; but which could not have happened in a free and liberal nation, like ours, without ſuch potent incitements, as ariſe from religious prejudices.

To prevent ſuch dangerous conſequences, and to reſcue the Scriptures from the hands of ſuch empyrics, ought to be the aim and endeavour of every rational theologiſt. The ſalutary waters of life ſhould be preſented to the people as free of every foreign admixture as poſſible; and nothing ſhould be preſented along with them, that has the leaſt tendency to foment bigotry or create party-rage. Let profound myſtics and ſubtle caſuiſts be, if they will, employed in diſcovering *allegorical*, *anagogical*, and *moral* meanings; let profeſſed polemics torment the text, to make it a-

gree with their favourite hypotheſis; it is the buſineſs of the mere interpreter, much more of the tranſlator, to give the obvious literal ſenſe of his author; with a view to no particular ſyſtem, and without regard to parties or principles.

Luckily this mode of interpreting has been already adopted by our beſt writers; and we have only to follow and improve their plan. Whoever has read, with attention, Whiſton's Eſſays on the true text of the Old Teſtament, Hallett's notes on ſeveral texts of Scripture, Mudge and Merrick on the Pſalms, Coſtard's Obſervations and Diſſertations, Pilkington's Remarks, Heath and Peters on Job, Hunt on Proverbs, Deſvoeux on Eccleſiaſtes, Arnold on the Apocrypha; above all Dr. Kennicott's Diſſertations on the ſtate of the Hebrew text, and Biſhop Lowth's admirable Preface to his tranſlation of Iſaiah *, muſt, we think, be convinced that ſacred criticiſm can never be brought to the perfection of which it is ſuſceptible, but by the method they have pointed out and practiſed: and his conviction will be ſtill more compleat, if he read the ſeveral pieces that have been written on the other ſide of the queſtion †.

* Add to theſe the Prefaces and Annotations of Blayney and Biſhop Newcome, ſome papers in the Theological Repoſitory, ſeveral of Biſhop Watſon's Theological Tracts, and many excellent occaſional remarks in the Monthly and Critical Reviews, and Gentleman's Magazine.

† See Rutherforth's, and the French Abbé's Letters to Kennicott, Robertſon's Analyſis of the Pentateuch, Baruh's Critica Sacra examined—Durel on the Hebrew text, Horne's View, Purver's Annotations. See alſo different works of Schmid, Eichorn, Tychſen, Razenberger, &c. &c.

Having thus pretty copiouſly treated on the principal cauſes of the imperfection of modern verſions, and pointed out what I deemed the ſureſt means of removing them, I will now venture to give my opinion of the diſtinguiſhing characters of a good tranſlation; and of the chief qualifications neceſſary for a tranſlator.

Firſt of all then, a tranſlation of the Bible ought to be faithful; that is, ought to expreſs all the meaning and no more than the meaning of the original. But though this is univerſally allowed to be the firſt quality of a good verſion, it is not eaſy to determine how it is to be attained: and one of the greateſt difficulties I have met with, was to fix upon that preciſe mode of rendering which ſhould be the beſt calculated to give a genuine copy of the Scriptures, in intelligible Engliſh; without prejudice to the ſimplicity and dignity of the originals. Two oppoſite extremes were, I knew, to be equally avoided, a wild paraphraſe and a ſervile verſion; but in what particular point between them I ſhould reſt, or how the happy medium was to be always preſerved, were problems, of which, the more I revolved them in my mind, the more hard I experienced it to find a ſatisfactory ſolution.

I conſulted my learned friends; but they differed ſo widely in their ſentiments, that I was more perplexed than before; and, after all, obliged to rely on my own judgment, ſuch as it is; and to preſcribe for myſelf one uniform route, that ſeemed the moſt likely to lead me on, with the leaſt danger, to the intended goal. I en-

tered into it with the greater confidence, becauſe it had been trodden before by Symmachus and Jerom; and recommended by the beſt critics of every age, as the ſureſt way to ſucceed.

My tranſlation, then, is neither literal nor verbal; but, if I may uſe the term, ſtrictly *ſentential;* that is, every ſentence of the Engliſh correſponds as exactly to the Hebrew, as the difference of the two idioms will permit; and although I have not made myſelf ſo much a ſlave to the original, as to adopt its peculiar phraſeology and conſtruction, where they greatly differed from our own, I have always kept as cloſely to it as was compatible with the ideas I had formed to myſelf of a good tranſlation *.

I am not ignorant of the arguments that are urged in favour of a ſervilely literal verſion. I have long and ſeriouſly pondered them, and found them to be light as air. The chief, and indeed the only ſpecious one, is that in a free tranſlation, there is no ſmall danger of ſubſtituting the tranſlator's ideas, in the room of the author's; and conſequently of miſleading the reader: but it would be eaſy to prove that this danger is greater in literal verſions; and that Pagninus and Montanus are leſs faithful guides than even Caſtalio, Michaelis or Wynne. It is indeed abſolutely impoſſible to tranſlate literally from any language whatever, without being often barba-

* *Tranſlatio vera eſt cujus ſenſus a ſuo fonte non deviat, ſed ſententias reddit et eaſdem et aequales.* Greg. de Valentia apud Walton.

rous, obſcure and equivocal; and this alone is a ſufficient reaſon for tranſlating freely *.

For perſpicuity is the ſecond moſt eſſential quality of a good tranſlation; nor need we the authority of Horace or Ariſtotle to eſtabliſh a propoſition ſo agreeable to common ſenſe. The Jewiſh, like all other writers, certainly wrote to be underſtood. The poets and prophets themſelves are not obſcure on account of their ſtile; which, though bold and figurative, muſt have been perfectly intelligible when they wrote; but from our imperfect knowledge of the Hebrew idiom and of the cuſtoms and manners of thoſe times. A tranſlator, therefore, who, under the pretext that his originals are

* From this the reader muſt by no means infer that my tranſlation is not a cloſe one. Between *looſe* and *liberal* the diſtance is great; and even of liberal tranſlations there are many various kinds; ſome of which are little different from what is often, though improperly, called a *literal* verſion. What I mean is, that perſpicuity and the other qualities of a good tranſlation ought never to be ſacrificed to a ſcrupulous adherence to the letter of the original: and, indeed, an Engliſh tranſlator will not often have occaſion to make ſuch ſacrifices. Our language eaſily moulds itſelf into the Hebrew form; and it rarely happens that we are under any neceſſity of having recourſe to paraphraze or circumlocution, to expreſs the full meaning of the text. Even when the ſyntactical arrangement is different, there is a ſtriking equipollence of ſimplicity, conciſeneſs and energy to be attained; which, perhaps no other modern language can boaſt of; and which is not found in ours, with regard to any other language, but the Hebrew. With this natural advantage, I flatter myſelf I ſhall be able to give a verſion in nearly as few words as are in the original; and, at any rate, leſs verboſe than even our preſent vulgar tranſlation. The very few liberties I have taken with the text, to render my verſion more intelligible, and I flatter myſelf more energic; and the ſmall deviations I have made from the track of my anteceſſors, for the ſake of a more eaſy and unembaraſſed march, ſhall be noted and examplified, in my General preface.

obſcure, affects to give an obſcure tranſlation, betrays either his idleneſs or his ignorance; offers an inſult to his reader; and throws an oblique ridicule on the author he pretends to interpret. If the Scriptures are at all to be tranſlated, of which we can have no doubt, they ſhould certainly be made as plain and perſpicuous as poſſible; and not a ſingle ambiguity ſhould be left in them that can be by any means removed. That there are certain myſterious words of the originals, which ſhould not be rendered, may be a pious, but is not a rational notion. The Greek and Hebrew are not, of their own nature, more ſacred languages than the Welch or Wallachian: and ſurely, to a mere Engliſh reader, *paſs-over* and *praiſe ye the Lord*, are not leſs ſignificant and far more edifying ſounds than *paſch*, and *hallelujah*.

A third quality of a good verſion is elegance; but an elegance of a ſpecial kind, and of peculiar characteriſticks. That an elegant tranſlation of the Bible has a great advantage over a barbarous one, is ſtrongly verified by that of Luther; which would never have been ſo well received at firſt, nor continued ſo long the favourite of the German nation; if it had not, in an eminent degree, poſſeſſed the charms of an inchanting ſtile, and all the graces of a correct and elegant diction. The idle ſneer of F. Simon, "that Luther "ſeemed to have only in view to make the Holy Ghoſt ſpeak good "German," is in reality a great panegyric; and the aim of Luther ought to be that of every other tranſlator. It is an odd manner of

conciliating the taſte and fixing the attention of the reader, to tell him, you deſpiſe elegancy of compoſition.

But how is this elegancy to be acquired? Perhaps, it is not entirely to be acquired. It muſt be, in part, the gift of nature; but the talent may certainly be cultivated and improved; and the obſervation of the following rules, I apprehend, will be found contributive to that purpoſe.

In the firſt place, a tranſlator of taſte will be careful to make a juſt and proper ſelection of terms. Secondly, he will arrange them in the moſt natural order. Thirdly, he will reject all meretricious ornaments. Let us illuſtrate theſe rules by a few examples.

A proper choice of terms is the firſt and perhaps the hardeſt duty of a tranſlator. It is even harder for him, than for an original compoſer. The latter may accomodate the ſentence to his words; but the former is under an abſolute neceſſity of adapting words to ſentences. Now as there is, in no language, a perfect *ſynonymity* of any two terms, it becomes a matter of great difficulty to make always a juſt diſtinction. The ſame Hebrew word, Geneſis i. 16. has been rendered *lights*, *luminaries*, and *illuminations*. The firſt was the term adopted by our laſt tranſlators; the ſecond is uſed by Wells, Stackhouſe, and Dodd; and the third by Lookup: but whoever examines the analogical propriety of the three terms, and compares them with the original, will clearly perceive, that *luminaries* is here a more ſuitable term than *lights*, and *lights* than

illuminations—To *divide*, to *ſeparate*, and to *diſtinguiſh* are words of nearly the ſame ſignification; yet I ſhould ſay, "to *divide* a vic-" tim, a portion, an inheritance, the land, the ſpoil; to *ſeparate* light "from darkneſs, waters from waters, the ſons of Levi from the "other tribes; to *diſtinguiſh* the clean from the unclean, the holy "from the profane, the children of Iſrael from the Egyptians."

It may, however, happen that a word ſhall properly enough expreſs the meaning of the original, and yet be inelegant and inadmiſſible; either, becauſe it is altogether obſolete, or is of low and trite uſage, or has ſome ludicrous idea annexed to it, or, in fine, ſavours of affectation and pedantry. In all theſe caſes a judicious tranſlator will ſubſtitute ſome more modern, more noble, more decent, and more unaffected term; though, perhaps, it ſhould not be quite ſo ſignificant and emphatical. *Albeit*, *fet*, *hoſen*, *leaſing*, *ſith*, *ſeeth*, *ſod* were in the days of our forefathers as expreſſive and congruous words, as thoſe we now uſe inſtead of them; yet no tranſlator, who ſtudies elegance, will admit them into his verſion; much leſs will he admit ſuch indelicate vulgariſms, as we find in almoſt every page of Purver's tranſlation; or ſuch quaintneſs of expreſſion, as is too often chargeable on Le Cene *.

All this, I think, will be readily granted by thoſe who are in the leaſt acquainted with the laws of good writing. But, in the

* Both theſe vices are wonderfully united in a ridiculous and profane verſion of the New Teſtament, publiſhed with the Greek, in two volumes octavo, in the year 1729.

courſe of my labours, a doubt has occurred, relative to this ſubject; which I wiſh to propoſe to the conſideration of the learned. It has been, I believe, a generally received idea that a tranſlator ſhould prefer words that are originally of the language into which he tranſlates, to words that have been adopted from other languages; and, I confeſs, I was once ſtrongly prepoſſeſſed with this idea. For why, ſaid I, ſhould we have recourſe to Greek and Latin, when we can find equivalent terms of good Saxon etymology? I am now convinced I was in the wrong; and that words of a foreign extraction are, not ſeldom, preferable to thoſe of our own growth. I will give my reaſons, and ſupport them by examples.

It will not, I think, be denied, that, of words equally ſignificant, thoſe are the moſt eligible, which are the leaſt productive of ambiguity, the leaſt liable to receive new and acceſſary meanings, and the leaſt likely to deviate into triteneſs and vulgarity *. But to me it appears evident, that words, which we have adopted from other languages, have generally all thoſe qualities in a greater degree than the original terms of our own. They are therefore generally to be preferred. For this reaſon I ſhould rather ſay to "*eſtabliſh*" than "to *ſet up* a covenant;" "to *regulate*" rather than "to *rule* "the day and the night;" *abyſs* rather than *deep*; *diſmiſs* rather than *ſend away*; *paradiſe* rather than *garden*; *deludge* rather than *flood*; *conflux* or *aſſemblage* of waters rather than *gathering together* of waters; *genealogy* rather than *book of the generations*, &c.

* See Michaelis's Diſſertation on the influence of opinions on language. Sect. 2.

This rule, however, admits of very many exceptions; and great diſcretion, is required in the uſe of it. A word of foreign derivation, though fully naturalized, is often leſs proper than another aboriginal one of the ſame ſignification. Thus, there is no doubt but that the common verſion of Geneſis xi. 8. "The Lord *ſcattered* "them;" is preferable to Lookup's: "The Lord *diſſipated* them;" although perhaps, *diſperſed* would here be better than either. In like manner, I ſhould prefer *an iſſue of blood* or a *blood iſſue* to *a ſanguinary flux; after theſe things* to *after theſe tranſactions; nakedneſs* to *nudity; power* to *ability; fooliſhneſs* to *infatuation*, &c.

It may ſometimes even happen, that a word of our own growth and an exotic one of the ſame force, are of ſuch a nature as to be, reſpectively, more proper in one circumſtance, and leſs ſo in another. Thus, of the terms *drunk* and *inebriated*, I ſhould uſe the firſt, Job xii. 25. "he maketh them to ſtagger, like a *drunk* man:" but the latter Gen. ix. 21. "and he drunk of the wine until he was *inebri-* "*ated*;" for reaſons which, I think, will be obvious to every intelligent reader. I would not in the laſt inſtance tranſlate *intoxicated* with Lookup; becauſe intoxication does not properly denote drunkenneſs, in as far as it proceeds from exceſs in drinking; but from a poiſonous quality ſuppoſed to be in the drink. Again, though *caſt out* and *expel* be both good words, yet, if I am not deceived, the laſt would be the moſt proper word Gen. iii. 24. "So he *expelled* the "man," &c. but, in the mouth of Sarah, Gen. xxi. 10. "*Caſt out* that

" bond woman" ſeems to be a more eligible rendering. In ſhort, that term is ever to be preferred, which is the moſt diſcriminately expreſſive of the particular idea, it is meant to convey.

Our laſt tranſlators paid great attention to this ſort of propriety; which gives uncommon beauty and energy to their ſtile. They generally, indeed, preferred old Engliſh terms to recently imported ones *; and, at this day, they may appear to have ſometimes carried that preference beyond due bounds: but we ſhould conſider, that 174 years are paſſed ſince their tranſlation was made; and that many words are now grown familiar to us which were not then at all in uſe; while many others, that were then of the beſt uſage, have gradually gone into deſuetude.

But it is not enough that the words be properly choſen; they muſt alſo be properly arranged, we are told that Addiſon was ſo ſcrupulouſly nice in this particular, that he would often alter a whole paper for the ſake of a few miſplaced particles. Be this as it may, it is certain that nothing contributes more to elegance than the appoſite arrangement of words. " In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and " God created the heaven and " the earth in the beginning," are in reality compoſed of the ſame terms: but how flat is the laſt, which is Purver's tranſlation, com-

* Sometimes, however, they abandoned this mode of rendering without neceſſity, and even to the detriment of their verſion. Ezek. ix. 11. They tranſlate " the man *reported* the matter" inſtead of " the man brought back word"; though the laſt be not only a more Engliſh, but alſo a more literal tranſlation.

pared with the firſt, which is the common one? It is equal, as to the meaning, whether we ſay with Lookup: "They had ſerved Che-"dorlaomer twelve years, and rebelled in the thirteenth," or with King James's tranſlators, "Twelve years they had ſerved Chedorla-"omer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled;" yet it will not, we preſume, be denied that the latter is by far the moſt elegant mode of arrangement *.

With regard to meretricious ornaments, the ſtrict mode of rendering which, thoſe who have tranſlated the Scriptures have generally preſcribed to themſelves, has luckily preſerved them from falling into that defect: and this is, perhaps, the ſtrongeſt argument that can be urged in favour of literal verſions. The ſtile of Pliny, Seneca, or even of Cicero might be clothed, with ſome degree of ſeeming propriety, in the Engliſh dreſs of a Stanhope, or Leſtrange; but Caeſar, Salluſt, or Demoſthenes would appear ſtrangely metamorphoſed in ſuch a garb. Leſs ſtill does the ſacred Scripture admit of this ſort of embelliſhment. The elegance that

* From an improper arrangement of words ariſes, not only inelegance, but often obſcurity and ſometimes a miſapprehenſion of the tranſlator's meaning. Inſtances of this are extremely frequent in Purver. But I ſhall preſent the reader with one from the common verſion. In Ezek. vi. 12. we find theſe words: "And thou ſhalt eat it as barley-cakes, and thou ſhalt "bake it with dung that cometh out of a man, in their ſight." By this arrangement it ſhould ſeem, as if the dung were to come out of the man, in the ſight of the people; nor does the comma after man, entirely remove the ambiguity: whereas, tranſpoſe the words thus, as they indeed ſtand in the original: "As barley-cakes thou ſhalt eat it, and with dung, that cometh "from man, thou ſhalt bake it in their ſight." The ſenſe is plain and obvious, the turn, if I am not miſtaken, leſs proſaical, and yet the tranſlation more literal than before.

ſuits it is ſimple and unaffected; not the elegance of a court-lady decked out for a ball or birth-day, but that of rural beauty in her Sunday's apparel, modeſtly decorated with ſuch flowers as grow in her native meads. The example of Caſtalio, whoſe greateſt and almoſt only fault was an affectation to adorn his verſion with exotic finery, ſhould be a powerful warning to all future tranſlators, to avoid repeating an experiment that proved unſucceſsful even in his hands. Compare his Latin verſion with that of Houbigant, or Harwood's Engliſh New Teſtament with the vulgar tranſlation, and you will have a ſtriking illuſtration of what I have here advanced.

A fourth quality of a good tranſlation is as ſtrict a uniformity of ſtile and manner as is conſiſtent with the other foregoing properties. It ſhould not be cloſe in one place and free in another; ſometimes correct, and at other times careleſs; here, arrayed in the robes of a faſhionable taſte, and there, only covered with the rags of ruſticity; much leſs muſt it appear a piece of patch work by different hands.

ſervetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto proceſſerit, et ſibi conſtet.

It does not, however, hence follow, that the ſame words or even the ſame phraſes ſhould always, and without the leaſt variation, be rendered in the ſame manner. Thoſe critics, who have required this, have required too much. A compliance with ſo rigorous a law would often produce a tranſlation not only unintelligible but

extremely erroneous. When Lookup, Gen. v. 1. tranſlates "This " is the *roll* of the hiſtories of Adam," he tranſlates with ſome ſort of propriety, becauſe the Hebrew word there ſignifies a *narrative*, and narratives were commonly written on *rolls*: but when, Gen. xv. 5. he renders the ſame Hebrew term by the ſame vernacular one: " Look toward the *roll* of the ſtars," he gives to the word *roll* an acceptation of which it is not ſuſceptible; and, perhaps, impreſſes a falſe idea on the mind of his reader. For who would imagine that *roll* here were the ſame as *number*; and not rather that it meant *rolling* or *rotation?* not to mention that the original word is in this place a verb, and well rendered in the common verſion, *tell*; ſtill better by Bate, *number*.

It is, then, enough that the ſame word or phraſe be, in the ſame circumſtances and in the ſame acceptation, tranſlated in the ſame manner: nor can this be conſidered as a hard reſtriction on the tranſlator; for if he has once hit on a good term or mode of expreſſion, why would he ſeek to change it merely for the ſake of variety, at the riſk of ſtumbling on a worſe?

Yet this general uniformity in tranſlating ſhould not preclude a particular attention to that diverſity of ſtile which characteriſes the different Scripture-writers. This is a fifth quality of a good tranſlation, which, however difficult to attain, ought certainly and by all means, to be aimed at. The hiſtorical parts of the Bible are not to be rendered in the ſame manner, as the poetical; nor theſe, as the

ſentential. The ſtile of the book of Job is not the ſtile of Iſaiah, nor the ſtile of Iſaiah that of any other prophet. Every writer, whether ſacred or profane, has ſomething peculiar to himſelf, and it ought to be the endeavour of a tranſlator to retain as much as poſſible of that peculiarity. He muſt, as Biſhop Lowth finely expreſſes it, "imitate his features, his air, his geſture, and, as far as "the difference of language will permit, even his voice."

By this time the reader will be ſufficiently prepared to draw this inference—That a good tranſlation of the Bible is a moſt arduous taſk; and he will, probably, wonder at the reſolution, or raſhneſs, of that individual, who ventures ſingly to undertake it. Nor will his aſtoniſhment be leſſened by viewing the following ſketch of the neceſſary qualifications of a tranſlator; which with a trembling hand I now venture to delineate.

A tranſlator, then, muſt in the firſt place be well acquainted with the language from which, and the language into which he tranſlates; and, for that purpoſe, muſt have made a long and ſerious ſtudy of both. It is even hard to ſay, to which of them he ought to have paid the greateſt attention: ſo nearly balanced are the inconveniences that would enſue from inattention to either.

It is indeed natural enough to ſuppoſe that a due knowledge of that language, which we have been accuſtomed to ſpeak from our infancy, would be much more eaſily acquired, than that of one, which we are obliged to learn, by the dint of memory, from books.

But that very facility with which we attain our mother-tongue in a certain degree of idiomatical propriety, is a real obſtacle to our attaining it in perfection. We are too apt to imagine that he, who readily expreſſes himſelf, expreſſes himſelf well; and the negligences and even the ſoleciſms of a familiar or provincial ſtile, will ſometimes imperceptibly ſteal into our moſt elaborate compoſitions. There is no colloquial dialect perfectly pure: not that of the capital, not that of the court, not that of the college; and many expreſſions iſſue daily from the mouths of our moſt accurate and polite ſpeakers, that would not bear the teſt of a ſevere criticiſm. A writer muſt, therefore, be continually on his guard againſt the obtruſion of a low and vulgar phraſeology, and weigh every word and ſentence with grammatical ſkill and logical preciſion.

On the other hand the difficulty of learning a dead language is evident; eſpecially of ſuch a language as the Hebrew. The compoſitions in it are few, and incorrectly tranſmitted to us: the beſt lexicons are yet very imperfect: the ſignification of many words is extremely dubious, and their etymology very often equivocal. Hence he, who aſpires at but a competent knowledge of it, muſt frequently have recourſe to the other Oriental dialects; the grammar, vocabulary and genius of which he muſt, conſequently, be well acquainted with.

All this is undoubtedly requiſite in a tranſlator of the Bible; but it is not all that is requiſite. He muſt, moreover, be conver-

ſant in Greek and Roman learning; by means of which, many paſſages of Scripture may be illuſtrated. Poets, philoſophers, hiſtorians, philologiſts, geographers, naturaliſts—all ought to enter into his plan of reading; becauſe from all he may, occaſionally, derive advantage. Nor ſhould modern travels, voyages and topographical deſcriptions eſcape his notice. In ſhort he muſt be as much as poſſible a univerſal ſcholar; and if he be not ſo capacious a living library, as to retain all he has read; he ſhould, at leaſt, be able to recollect, where to ſeek what he immediately wants.

Yet the moſt profound erudition will not ſecure him ſucceſs, if he be not alſo poſſeſſed of an acute penetration, a nice diſcernment, and a ſure and delicate taſte, formed on the beſt models of antiquity. The moſt of thoſe who have given tranſlations of the Bible were, as Michaelis obſerves * mere ſcholaſtic theologians; who explained the Scriptures according to the ſame dry methodical rules, by which they would have explained the Categories of Ariſtotle. They were even perſwaded that philology had nothing to do with either logic or divinity. *Quanto eris melior grammaticus*, ſaid they, *tanto pejor dialecticus et theologus*. This ridiculous maxim was ſtrongly urged againſt Reuchlin, Valla, Vives, Faber, Eraſmus; and had, before, been urged, with equal ignorance and zeal, againſt St. Jerom. With regard to the interpretation of the Scriptures, the maxim might, perhaps, be inverted: *Quanto melior theologus, tanto*

* Praefat. in notas ad Lowth.

pejor interpres. At any rate, one of the moſt eſſential qualifications of a good tranſlator is to be a good grammarian; without which, all the theology of the Sorbonne will be of little uſe.

From what has been now ſaid, it follows, as a neceſſary corrollary; that a tranſlator of the Bible ſhould have a conſtitution to bear, and an inclination to undergo, aſſiduous and perſeverant labour; a qualification too rarely conjoined with quickneſs of apprehenſion and elegance of taſte. He muſt proſecute his always ſerious, often unengaging ſtudies, with all the warm enthuſiaſm of a poet or painter; and yet with all the patient drudgery of a laborious mechanic. To pore, from morn to eve, on ſuch a number of books, diverſity of tongues and variety of figures, is enough to confuſe the cleareſt intellects; and to deaden the perſpicacity of the mental, as well as of the corporeal eye. If writing the dictionary of a ſingle language be, as Scaliger thought, an adequate puniſhment for parricide; what crime may not be atoned for, by tranſlating the Hebrew ſcriptures?

The laſt, but not leaſt neceſſary, qualification of a tranſlator is an honeſt impartiality. Whether that be abſolutely attainable by any mortal, may be reaſonably queſtioned: but no one will deny, that every poſſible endeavour ſhould be made to attain it. Unwedded to ſyſtems of any kind, literary, phyſical or religious; a tranſlator of the Bible ſhould ſit down to render his author, with the ſame indifference he would ſit down to render Thucydides or

Xenophon. He ſhould try to forget, that he belongs to any particular ſociety of Chriſtians; be extremely jealous of his moſt rational prepoſſeſſions; keep all theological conſequences as far out of his ſight as poſſible; and inveſtigate the meaning of his original, by the rules only of a ſound and ſober criticiſm; regardleſs of pleaſing or diſpleaſing any party.

Some reader may here be diſpoſed to aſk: Are you poſſeſſed of all theſe qualifications? To this not unnatural queſtion I beg leave to give an anſwer, ſomewhat ſimilar to that which Cicero gives on a ſimilar occaſion; though on a different ſubject. Having deſcribed, with inimitable eloquence, the qualities of an accompliſhed orator, he modeſtly declares that he has given, rather an idea of what he conceived to be poſſible, than of what he ever expected to ſee. How much greater reaſon have I to acknowledge that my ideal portraiture of a good tranſlator of the Bible is far beyond the reach of my own abilities.

To be ſtill more explicit and ingenuous; although I have long endeavoured after the qualifications abovementioned, to affirm poſitively that I have actually acquired them all, or any one of them in an eminent degree, would be an unconſcientious and raſh aſſertion. In learning, genius and judgment I know myſelf to be inferior to many; ſome few may exceed me in diligence, aſſiduity and laborioufneſs; but in candor, impartiality and uprightneſs of intention I will yield to none.

It is on theſe more humble and ſubordinate qualifications that I principally reſt my hopes of ſucceſs; and it is, no doubt, chiefly owing to this part of my known character that my ſcheme has been ſo generally approved of. For although I belong to a religion that had been long proſcribed, and is yet far from being popular in this country; and although my primary intention was to procure a tolerable verſion of the Holy Scriptures for the uſe of the Britiſh Catholics, the flattering and unexpected applauſe I have met with, in every part of the kingdom, from the learned of all communions, makes me hope that my work may be of more general utility than I at firſt imagined; and contribute more or leſs to promote Biblical knowledge over all the land.

To thoſe who have encouraged me with their approbation, or aided me by their counſel; or who may, hereafter, be induced to do me the like good offices; I ſhall, in due time and place, make my thankful acknowledgments: but I cannot refrain, at preſent, from mentioning two or three perſons, to whom I have had particular obligations.

The late Dr. Kennicott, on whoſe tomb every Biblical ſtudent ought annually to ſtrew the tributary flower, has a peculiar claim to my grateful remembrance. I had hardly made known my deſign, when he anticipated my wiſhes to have his advice and aſſiſtance towards the execution of it, with a degree of unreſerved frankneſs and friendſhip, which I had never before experienced in

a ſtranger. Not contented with applauding and encouraging himſelf, he puſhed me forewards from my obſcurity to the notice of others: he ſpoke of me to BARRINGTON; he introduced me to LOWTH. The very ſhort time he lived, after my acquaintance with him, and the few opportunities I had of profiting from his converſation, are diſtreſſing reflexions; but ſtill I count it a happineſs to have been acquainted with a man, whoſe labours I have daily occaſion to bleſs, and whoſe memory I muſt ever revere.

Another perſonage, to whom, if my work ſhall have any merit, the world will ſtand principally indebted for it, is the Right Honourable Lord PETRE; at whoſe requeſt it was undertaken, and under whoſe patronage it is carried on. For although the plan itſelf is a plan of twenty years ſtanding; and although the author had never any thing ſo much at heart as its accompliſhment; yet his circumſtances in life were ſuch, as muſt have rendered that impoſſible, without the providential interpoſition of ſuch a patron. But Lord PETRE is not only the Author's patron; he is in ſome reſpects the author. It was his great love for religion, and his extreme deſire of ſeeing Scriptural knowledge more generally promoted among thoſe of his own communion; that ſuggſted to him the idea of procuring a new tranſlation, before he knew that I had ever entertained a ſimilar idea, and at a time when I had almoſt deſpaired of ſeeing it realized. His Lordſhip, I truſt, will pardon me for inſerting, without his knowledge, this public teſtimony of

his piety and munificence; which I could not ſuppreſs without violence to my own feelings; and which the public has, in ſome ſort, a right to know.

Bp. Geddes of Edinburgh will, likewiſe, permit me to ſay, that his early and warm approbation of my plan made me undertake it with more alacrity and purſue it with greater ardour. His prudent advices and ſeaſonable encouragement have often given a new ſtimulus to my ſpirits in the midſt of my labours, and ſometimes ſupported me under their almoſt oppreſſive load. I truſt, from his long uninterrupted friendſhip, that he will continue the ſame good offices, until I ſhall have fairly diſcharged myſelf of the heavy burthen; and I foreſee I ſhall yet ſtand in need of ſuch good offices.

For although I can with pleaſure affirm that all thoſe who have hitherto taken the trouble to enquire into the nature of my deſign, and done me the honour to read my Proſpectus while yet in manuſcript, have approved of it, without reſerve *; yet I am not ſo vain or fooliſh as to expect that I ſhall meet with no contradiction in the execution of it. That would be a fate more favourable than befel any of my predeceſſors in the ſame career: and I ſhould think my work of little importance indeed, if it totally eſcaped cenſure.

* I take this occaſion to return my warmeſt thanks to the Biſhops of London and Saliſbury, Dr. Goſſet of London, Principal Robertſon of Edinburgh, and Drs. Reid and Findlay of Glaſgow; not only for the very favourable manner in which they have been pleaſed to ſpeak of this Proſpectus; but alſo for ſome valuable hints of improvement, to which, they will ſee, I have paid all due regard.

The ſyſtematic theologian, and ſuch theologians there are in all communions, can reliſh no other mode of interpreting Scripture than that which ſuits with his own partial ideas; and every deviation from theſe will be by him accounted an unpardonable crime. Bigotry and zealotiſm will probably roar aloud at my moderation: the ſciolift will write to ſhew that he can write; and envy, malignant envy, has ſometimes been ſeen purſuing objects even as mean as me.

I hope I have a ſufficient ſtock of philoſophy and religion to bear even the diſappointments that ariſe from unſucceſsfulneſs in literary purſuits; which I believe to be among the moſt ſevere of all diſappointments. I only wiſh not to be judged and condemned without a fair trial. When my tranſlation ſhall be once publiſhed, it will be the Public's as much as mine, and every one will have a right to form what judgment he pleaſes of it: but until then I earneſtly requeſt all Chriſtians in general, and thoſe of my own perſuaſion in particular, "Not to judge before the time;" nor even then without due examination. My plan is now before them. Let critics point out its defects, and ſuggeſt improvements with candor and charity. I will pay attention to their remarks, their admonitions, their ſtrictures; and I promiſe to

Make uſe of ev'ry friend and ev'ry foe

towards the rendering of my work leſs unworthy of the public favour.

For the reſt, I am not only well pleaſed to have it thought, but extremely anxious to have it ſaid and known, that, as a tranſlator,

I am addicted to no particular ſyſtem; nor guided by any principles but the rules of tranſlating well.

If to future tranſlators I may not be able to exhibit a model of taſte and elegance, I flatter myſelf I ſhall ſet them no common example of religious moderation. It is certainly the intereſt, and ought to be the concern, of both Catholics and Proteſtants, to have their common Code as pure and genuine as poſſible; and their only conteſt, in this reſpect, ſhould be, which ſhall do moſt to clear it from every ſort of corruption. To deſpiſe the labours of another, becauſe he is of a different country or creed, is unworthy of a rational being; and contrary to the practice of the beſt Chriſtian writers of antiquity. Origen was ſo far from depretiating the works of thoſe, who were not of his own communion, that he joined, in the ſame volume, the verſions of Jews and reputed Heretics, with that which the Church uſed: and St. Jerom, profiting of his collection, made no ſcruple to borrow from all of them, as he ſaw occaſion.

It is, indeed, from the united ſtudies of the learned of all communions, that we can ever hope to bring the Scriptures to that degree of purity and perfection, of which they are yet ſuſceptible; and it is with infinite pleaſure we perceive that the learned themſelves begin to be of this ſentiment. The labours of a Houbigant, a Villhoiſon, a Georgi and a Roſſi are as much prized and applauded at London, Leipſick and Goettengen, as thoſe of a Lowth,

a Kennicott and a Michaelis are at Paris, Parma and Rome: and if the preſent taſte for Oriental learning continue to be diffuſed, we may ſoon reaſonably look for, at leaſt, as perfect and impartial editions and tranſlations of the Hebrew claſſics, as we already have of the Greek and Latin.

I have laid before the Public the nature and end of my undertaking, the difficulties I had to encounter and the means I have uſed to overcome them, the dangers I had to fear and the cautions I have taken to ſhun them, the helps I have had, the guides I have chiefly followed, the mode of tranſlation I have adopted, the method I have purſued, and the rules I have preſcribed to myſelf in the proſecution of my plan: and, now, I look forward, with no ſmall anxiety, to that critical day, when the work itſelf muſt be ſubmitted to the examination of the ſame formidable tribunal, from whoſe decrees it is in vain for any author to appeal. To be ſure of ſucceeding, would be arrogance; to deſpond, puſillanimity. My hopes are at leaſt equal to my fears; and as long as the balance is but equally poized, I will perſevere in holding it.

Should I even fail in the execution of ſo vaſt a project, there is ſome conſolation in thinking that I have, in the opinion of good judges, pointed out the right way to ſucceſs. My Proſpectus, I am told, may ſerve as a general chart to younger and more unexperienced ſtudents in divinity, who may chuſe to embark in the ſame perilous voyage. I have delineated with preciſion the track which

I judged the ſafeſt for them to purſue, indicated the principal land-marks that ſhould direct their courſe, fixed buoys and beacons wherever I thought there was need, and warned them of ſuch rocks and ſhallows as they run the greateſt riſk of making ſhipwreck upon. Should my own little veſſel be, notwithſtanding, daſhed to pieces, let it be imputed to the unſkilfulneſs of the pilot, not to the impracticability of the paſſage; and ſerve only to encreaſe the warineſs and vigilance of the next navigator, without diminiſhing his intrepidity and ſpirit of enterprize.

By ſome, perhaps, it may be expected that I ſhould here give a ſpecimen of my tranſlation and of the form it is to appear in. But, beſides that this laſt is not yet exactly determined, a ſketch of the verſion itſelf would be but a fallacious criterion, by which to paſs a judgment either favourable or unfavourable. I ſhall be always ready to communicate my ideas and labours to the learned of every denomination, who may do me the honour to intereſt themſelves in my undertaking, and ſhall pay every ſort of due attention to their obſervations or advice: but I ſee no reaſon for gratifying idle curioſity, or malignant cenſorioufneſs, by a premature and partial publication. I will, however, ſubjoin a ſhort notice of the general oeconomy of the work, and ſo conclude a Proſpectus, that by ſome may, poſſibly, be deemed already too long.

Although the new verſion be made from a corrected text of the original, the preſent printed copies are never departed from, with-

out a ſpecial notation. The additions, omiſſions, tranſpoſitions and variations are all diſtinguiſhed by reſpective ſymbols, and ſupported by correſponding authorities.

The text of the verſion will be divided into new and more natural ſections, the number and contents of which will be printed on the outer margin: but the old diviſion of chapters and verſes will, for the reaſons abovementioned, be retained, and marked in the inner margin.

The correctional references, various readings, and explanatory notes, will be at the bottom of the page; the critical annotations at the end of the volume.

A new comparative Chronology will accompany every principal tranſaction, and be expreſſed in years before Chriſt, at the top of the page.

With regard to the concordantial references, or parallel paſſages, with which the margins of our Bibles are crowded; thoſe of them only will be retained that are manifeſtly real: for the greater number are only diſtant, and often arbitrary, alluſions.

To every Volume, and for the moſt part to every Book, will be prefixed a particular Preface; in which a compendious critical account will be given of its real or ſuppoſed author, its ſubject, ſtile and character, and the rank it holds among the Hebrew ſcriptures in the Jewiſh and Chriſtian canons.

The whole of the Old Teſtament will, as far as can be yet con-

jectured, be compriſed in four volumes. The firſt will contain the Pentateuch and its ſupplement the Book of Joſhua; the ſecond, the reſt of the Hiſtorical Books in their natural order; the third, the *Hagiographa*; and the fourth, the Prophets. To theſe it is intended to add a fifth, which, if properly executed, would be an uſeful introduction to the other four. Beſide a general Preface and Indexes, it ſhould contain the diſcuſſion of a great number of queſtions relative to the Hebrew ſcriptures; their antiquity, authenticity, inſpiration, &c. many of which ſtill appear to be ſuſceptible of farther elucidation.

As ſoon as the Firſt Volume ſhall be ready for the preſs, due notice will be given of the time and terms of publication; as likewiſe at what particular periods the following volumes may be expected.

I have now only to requeſt the learned, into whoſe hands this Proſpectus may come, to favour me with their remarks and ſtrictures on ſuch parts of it as they may think defective or improveable. And if they will, moreover, be ſo kind as to tranſmit to me their own obſervations on any difficult paſſage of Scripture, I ſhall conſider it as a ſingular obligation, and make a public acknowledgement of it. Any communications of this kind may be directed to the Author in Maddox Street, or to his Bookſeller, R. Faulder, in Bond Street, London.

THE END.

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